R E P O R T   R E S U M E S

ED 003 014   24

FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE. A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE, PHASE 3--EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY IN SELECTED NEWLY DEVELOPING NATIONS.

BY- LUCAS, GERARD   HANNA, PAUL R.
STANFORD UNIV., CALIF., SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
REPORT NUMBER CRP-1032-PT. 3   PUB DATE   64
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.45 HC-$11.84   296P.

DESCRIPTORS- EDUCATION, *EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES, *EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES, EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE, EDUCATIONAL POLICY, EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, *INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA, FRANCE, CONGO, BRAZZAVILLE

FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE FORMER FRENCH COLONY, THE CONGO, WAS INVESTIGATED WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS UPON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY. TWO VERY SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WERE STUDIED--(1) THE TRANSFER OF FORMAL, FRENCH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO AN AFRICAN SETTING FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERFORMING NORMATIVE FUNCTIONS PRESCRIBED BY THE SOCIETY AFFECTING THE TRANSFER, AND (2) THE INSTRUMENTAL USE OF THE TRANSFERRED INSTITUTIONS BY THE NEWLY SELF-DETERMINED RECIPIENT SOCIETY. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGOLESE SCHOOL SYSTEM SINCE 1883 WAS DESCRIBED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COLONIAL SITUATION OF WHICH IT WAS A PART AND A PRODUCT. THE STUDY ALSO EXPLORED SOME AREAS OF RESEARCH AND POINTED OUT SOME INCONSISTENCES BETWEEN THE NATURE AND PURPOSES OF THE CURRENT CONGOLESE EDUCATIVE MESSAGE, THE ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEANS USED IN THE TRANSMISSION, AND THE QUALITY OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS AS THEY RELATE TO THE GOALS OF THE CONGOLESE NATION. FINALLY, THE STUDY POINTS OUT THAT MORE PRODUCTIVE EFFORTS NEED TO BE EXERTED IF CONGOLESE FORMAL EDUCATION IS TO PERFORM ITS ROLE AS AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS. RESEARCH MAY HELP FIND OR CREATE SUCH AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE FOR EDUCATION. (HB)

ED003014

1032
pt-3

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education
This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated do not necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY IN SELECTED NEWLY DEVELOPING NATIONS

Phase 3: Formal Education in the Congo-Brazzaville: A Study of Educational Policy and Practice

Cooperative Research Project No. 1032

Gerard Lucas
Paul R. Hanna

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION CENTER
School of Education
Stanford University

EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY IN SELECTED NEWLY DEVELOPING NATIONS

Phase 3: Formal Education in the Congo-Brazzaville: A Study of Educational Policy and Practice

Cooperative Research Project No. 1032

Gerard Lucas

Paul R. Hanna
Project Director

Comparative Education Center
School of Education
Stanford University
Stanford, California

1964

The research reported herein was supported by
the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education,
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

FOREWORD

We live in a period of great expectations. The peoples of the newly developing nations have visions of a life potentially free from hunger, disease, ignorance, and serfdom. These awakened peoples, constituting a formerly depressed two-thirds of the human family, are on the march in Africa, in Asia, and in the Americas. They are determined to create viable economic institutions, laws, and mechanisms through which they can assure themselves and their posterity of health, longevity, the material necessities, and even some luxuries. They seek dynamic but dependable political institutions and customs through which justice and freedom may be maintained. They desire social conditions which generate equality of opportunity and create respect for human dignity.

In these heroic efforts to create a better life, the leaders of the nations conceive of education as the tool to shape the new life for their people. To produce more food and fiber, farmers and fishermen must be taught modern practices. To process producer and consumer goods efficiently from the raw resources of field, forest, mine, and sea, labor and management must know modern industrial techniques. To distribute the goods and services, men must learn the economics of marketing and of consuming. Education--both general and technical--has become a major weapon in the struggle of economic growth. Similarly in changing old customs and in developing new political and social institutions and mores, the school plays an increasingly crucial role.

During the past decade the newly developing nations have requested assistance in education planning from the UN agencies FAO, ILO, WHO, UNESCO, and the Technical Assistance Board. More recently the World Bank has made loans for educational projects. On a bilateral nation-to-nation basis, the United States, the USSR, France, Germany, Japan, the Commonwealth Nations, and other technologically developed peoples have been loaning their educational technicians to those nations requesting aid. The largest of such aid programs has been that provided by the United States Agency for International Development. Private corporations, foundations, and other segments of the United States community have made an additional contribution through their non-governmental channels to the gigantic task of creating the educational establishments overseas within which human resources could be developed.

While there is general agreement on the crucial role of education in the developmental processes, there is a critical scarcity of research to discover what educational approaches and strategies may be most effective under differing national and cultural conditions. With assistance from the United States Government, private foundations and corporations, and other sources, the Stanford University School of Education and the Stanford Research Institute have been engaged since 1955 in a variety of research activities to help fill the gap in research-based literature on the subject of educational investment in nation building. Planned, underway, or completed is a series of research projects investigating education as an instrument of national policy in (1) nations emerging from several differing colonial systems, (2) several technologically newly developing nations that have always been politically independent, and (3) several advanced nations that have a long history of independence. From the series of comparative studies an attempt ultimately will be made to extract any generalizations and principles that may lie unobserved or untested at present. From these generalizations and principles there might be constructed strategies that would help both donor and recipient as educational technical assistance is brought to bear on nation building.

The study here reported is one of this series done under contract with the Cooperative Research Bureau of the U.S. Office of Education. Mr. Gerard Lucas was the recipient of a Foreign Area Training Fellowship, financed by the Ford Foundation, during most of his residence both at Stanford University and overseas. Mr. Lucas completed his campus preparation for the overseas portion of this research in the spring of 1962 before summer departure for Paris and then going in the autumn to the Congo-Brazzaville as a Stanford University Research Assistant. Because of the long experience Mr. Lucas previously had in Sub-Saharan Africa, and because of arrangements Stanford University was able to make for this research, the Lucas family was well received by the public and private sectors in Brazzaville. Dozens of persons, scholars, government officials--French and Congolese--in Paris and throughout the new Congo nation have made contributions by supplying information and by permitting Mr. Lucas to consult the records of their respective organizations. In Brazzaville, Dr. R. Paulian, in particular, provided stimulating ideas and placed the resources of the "Institut de Recherches Scientifiques au Congo" at the disposal of our project. Dr. Paulian was most helpful to the Project Director during the short period he was in the Congo and later Dr. Paulian gave help on background material when he visited Stanford in 1963.

A large number of Congolese and French teachers, school administrators and students who must remain anonymous have provided the kind of selfless cooperation upon which certain aspects of this research depended.

This study by Mr. Lucas is the "other side of the coin" of a study completed and published in this same series by Mr. Jerry B. Bolibaugh.[1] It was our intent to design a pair of "back-to-back" studies that (1) would search the "French Educational Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa: Their Intent, Derivation, and Development" and (2) would, on the other hand, search the receipt, execution, and results of the Metropole French Intent in one of its former colonies, in this case, through "Formal Education in the Congo-Brazzaville." Both Bolibaugh and Lucas spent time together in the French Government archives in Paris before Mr. Lucas left Paris for Brazzaville; thereby the two researchers started their research on this pair of studies jointly. The Project Director took a responsibility of coordination and field visits for supervision.

---

[1] Jerry B. Bolibaugh, French Educational Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa: Their Intent, Derivation, and Development.

While Mr. Bolibaugh was reviewing in Paris the history of the Metropole's intentions for education overseas, Mr. Lucas in Brazzaville was reviewing the strategies as they were actually implemented in the ex-French Congo. He particularly searched those Congo educational developments that were in harmony with Metropole intent and those that were divergent and looked for the causes for compliant or divergent action in the Congo. He noted in detail the continuation or the changes that have been made by the Congolese since political independence from France in 1960.

Thus, by planning and carrying out these two studies simultaneously, we have available one picture of what was intended and what happens to the educational industry of a new nation that has been under a colonizing power for several generations. From a series of such paired studies we hope eventually to be able to formulate educational strategies appropriate to given sets of conditions.

Mr. Lucas was subsequently awarded the Stanford University doctorate for his research. The study is available from University of Michigan Microfilms, Inc., 313 North First Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, under the title Formal Education in the Congo-Brazzaville: A Study of Educational Policy and Practice.

Other studies in this USOE sponsored research project are listed on the inside back cover. These five studies, together with others completed, underway, or in the planning stages and funded by other sources are intended to provide some of the raw research data out of which hopefully we may draw better guidelines for future educational efforts on behalf of nation building.

Paul R. Hanna, Director
Comparative Education Center
School of Education
December 1964 Stanford University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

FOREWORD ii

LIST OF TABLES vi

INTRODUCTION 1

THE SETTING 8

COLONIZATION 23

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM 38

EVALUATION OF COLONIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE 127

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SCHOOL SYSTEM 148

EVALUATION OF CURRENT EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE 236

CONCLUSIONS AND SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 251

APPENDICES 259

I. Principales Productions et Exportations du Congo (Année 1961) 259

II. Selected Excerpts from Decree No. 6 of January 2nd, 1937, Concerning the General Organization of Education in A.E.F. 261

III. School Statistics for the Four A.E.F. Territories (1935, 1939, 1943, and 1946) 270

IV. Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)--Organizational Chart of the Ministry of National Education 271

V. Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)--Diagram of School System 272

VI. Test Forms 273

BIBLIOGRAPHY 281

LIST OF TABLES

Table | Page

1. Public Education in the Middle Congo: 1929-30 76
2. School Personnel and Supply Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Budget Middle Congo and A.E.F., 1925-1957 . . . 94
3. Contribution of FIDES to Educational Development in A.E.F., 1947-1955 95
4. Contribution of FIDES to Educational Development in the Middle Congo, July 1, 1955-June 30, 1958 96
5. Evolution of School Enrollment in A.E.F. and in the Congo, 1946-1954 97
6. Evolution of Mission Education in A.E.F., 1939-1952 99
7. Comparative Enrollments and Budgets for Congo Schools, 1950-53 108
8. Middle Congo Primary School Enrollment, 1953-1957 110
9. Middle Congo Primary School Enrollment by Courses, 1953-1957 110
10. Average Number of Pupils per Classroom in Middle Congo Primary Schools, 1951-1957 111
11. Middle Congo Education Examination Results, Local Primary School Certificate (C.E.P.), July 1957 115
12. Congo Examination Results First Secondary Cycle (B.E.P.C.) (Public and Private), July 1957 116
13. Congo School Enrollment, January 1, 1958, Number of Primary School Pupils 123
14. Congo School Enrollment, January 1, 1958, Number of Primary Schools and Classrooms 124
15. Teacher-Training Enrollment, January 1, 1958 (Five-Year Post-Primary Program) 124

Table Page

16. Number of Secondary School Pupils, January 1, 1958 125

17. Technical and Vocational Education, January 1, 1958 126

18. Republic of Congo National and Educational Current Expenditures (in Millions of CFA Francs) 166

19. Republic of Congo: School Personnel, May 1, 1962 188

20. Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) School Development, 1959-1962 193

21. Primary Education in Congo (Brazzaville), Distribution of Pupils by Grades, January 1, 1962 195

22. Secondary Education in Congo (Brazzaville), Distribution of Students by Grades, January 1, 1962 196

23. Secondary Education in Congo (Brazzaville), Distribution of Students by Grades, January 1, 1962 197

24. Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), School Examination Results, 1961-1962 and 1962-1963 200

25. Occupational Choices of Congolese Students, Test I-- Question 1, Sixth Grade Level 215

26. Occupational Choices of Congolese Students, Test I-- Question 1, Tenth Grade Level 216

27. Occupational Choices of Congolese Students, Test I-- Question Nurber 2, Motives for Occupational Choices . . . 218

INTRODUCTION

For as long as human beings have been interested in transmitting knowledge--from father to son, among peers, from one tribe to another--education has existed. Educational systems, however, deliberately created, formalized institutions, represent a more recent development by highly organized, complex social groups. The transfer of such educational systems--for a variety of reasons--from the societies in which they developed to other societies has not been unusual. Modern nation-states, having established varying degrees of control over the structures and content of their respective educational systems, have come to perceive of these systems as potentially effective instruments of national policy.

Relation of the Study to a Broader Research Design

Comparative education scholars, from Jullien de Paris to Kandel, Hans, and Baraday, have focused their attention on the study of educational systems as they have operated within the context of the nation-states which created them. Their descriptive studies have been generally restricted to systems developed by Western European nations and their extensions in North America and Australia. Since these nations are all spiritual heirs of Athens, Rome, and the Renaissance, it is not surprising that a high degree of similarity exists among these systems of education both in general aims and forms of organization.

Quite different, however, are the educational "systems," described in the last fifty years by anthropologists and sociologists, of less complex social groups. Indeed the method of cultural transmission employed by some of these groups was scarcely recognized as education by the Western European powers when they set out to build modern empires by establishing their rule over scores of Asian and African societies in the nineteenth century. In that special form of cultural contact known as colonialism, European educational systems thus came to be superimposed upon indigenous systems.

While European school systems and indigenous patterns of cultural transmission were being studied on a comparative basis, the former were playing a major role in the modification of indigenous cultures. Missionaries, whose goals were essentially, if narrowly, educative, stood at the vanguard of their respective colonizing societies and received at least the tacit support of their governments. The missionaries were soon assisted and sometimes replaced by their governments in an effort to transform the indigenous societies through formal education. Until recently, however, this common phenomenon had not attracted the attention of social scientists although they occasionally referred to it in their studies of acculturation. Several recent developments have changed this situation. First, the Second World War greatly quickened the pace of institutional transfers from the metropoles to their developing colonies. Second, in every colonized society an already acculturated minority developed the desire to replace their European masters and sought the support of the masses in their struggle for self-determination. With newly regained pride and confidence in traditional ways and values, scores of newly independent societies are determined to find their rightful place among the free nations of the world. Upon their success depend not only the peace of the next generations but also any positive contributions these "new" societies might make to the development of mankind. Too much is at stake to permit chance to be the only determining variable. Man can influence the course of events in desired directions if he makes intelligent use of his knowledge of physical and social forces.

To a large degree, European formal education has molded the mind and character of leaders in emerging nations. These leaders now rely heavily on the effects of the same educational systems to transform their nations into modern economic, social, political and cultural units. But effective use of the school as an instrument in the accomplishment of such a great task requires sophisticated knowledge of the instrument, of its potentialities, and of its limitations. In the case of former European colonies emerging as independent nations, "knowledge of the instrument" involves:

1) Knowledge of the philosophy, structure, content, and functions of the metropoles' systems of formal education as they existed at the time the colonies were founded.

2) The aims and policies of the segments of metropolitan societies--such as missionary groups--which initiated the transfer of European educational institutions.

3) The colonial socio-cultural context in which institutional transfer was effected.

4) The evolution over the years of both the socio-cultural context and the quantity and quality of educational opportunities offered to the colonized societies.

5) A detailed survey of the transferred educational institutions inherited by the new nations at the time of independence.

6) The identification of the new nations' aspirations expressed in statements of national goals and policies by traditional or elected spokesmen of the new nations.

7) The assessment of the outcomes of current formal education in the light of its expected functions as an instrument for the pursuit of national goals.

Put in the form of questions the preceding statements constitute a fertile new field of investigation for comparative education. In an attempt to answer these questions, Professor Paul R. Hanna of Stanford University has developed a series of research designs whose results will contribute to the growing literature on comparative education. This study is one of the series.

The European colonial powers have pursued policies similar in many respects but also differing according to the times and to the places of origin and of application. The publication of a representative sample of these similarities and differences is an immediate aim of Professor Hanna's research designs. As a first step, several pairs of studies are to be conducted in particular European metropoles and in one or more of the respective former colonies of each. In the case of the former French colonial empire, a study has already been made by Jerry Bolibaugh, working in the national archives in Paris, on the nature and derivations of French educational policies for the ex-French African colonies. The present study attempts, through a field study, to describe and interpret what happened to French educational policies when they were applied to one of the four ex-French Equatorial African territories, namely, the new Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study overlaps to some extent that of Jerry Bolibaugh's study, particularly in matters related to French educational policy toward the Congo. However, in this study, the emphasis lies on the implementation of policy, or on that level of policy which is mainly concerned with the application of general principles to practice.

The study is limited to the formal aspects of the French educative action in the ex-French Congo, that is, to the French effort to communicate ideas, values, attitudes, and skills to the Congolese within the framework of a school situation--no matter how simply structured the situation may have been at times. This does not imply an underestimation of the importance of the informal aspects of culture contact, but represents an attempt to identify the role of formal education in the complex process of cultural exchange as it occurred under colonial rule. In spite of the difficulties encountered in trying to measure the impact of the school on successive generations, the task is relatively easier than that of measuring the impact of one society as a whole on another society. For our purposes, we will study the school apart from the total cultural transmission process while recognizing the essential artificiality of the operation.

The Congolese school system currently operates within the politico-geographical boundaries of the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), an area which does not perfectly coincide with the ex-French Congo as the colony developed since 1883. Efforts will be made to restrict discussion of the historical part of this study to the French educational policies and practices in the geographic area presently served by the Congolese national school system.

The Problem

The problem studied here is related to two separate but successive processes:

1) The transfer of formal, European educational institutions[1] to an African setting for the purpose of performing normative functions prescribed by the society effecting the transfer.

2) The instrumental use of the transferred institutions by the newly self-determined recipient society.

In more specific terms, the processes involve the transfer of selected elements of the French educational institutions by segments of French society to parts of the Congo basin in the pursuit of goals and in response to needs perceived by those in control of the process; and the current use of the transferred institutions by the leaders of an emerging Congolese nation partly molded by the transferred institutions it has inherited.

Main Generalization

The descriptive analyses of those processes as they have been operating in the Congo (Brazzaville) since 1883 should yield evidence in support or refutation of the following hypothesis:

Current instrumental use of transferred educational institutions by a recipient society is largely determined--insofar as the society's choices of ends and means are reasoned and deliberate--by the functions these institutions have performed in this same society since they were introduced.

---

[1] An institution is defined by S. F. Nadel in his The Foundations of Social Anthropology (Glencoe: Free Press, 1951) as "a standardized mode of social behavior." In Nadel's concept the purposiveness of institutions is implied in the words, "social behavior." Further, the complexity of institutional aims often requires the development of many institutional "elements," each of which is sometimes referred to as an institution. But such elements are closely interdependent and form a "functional unit" serving some over-all purpose. Thus formal education may be considered an institution (with an over-all purpose) while primary education, for example, would be an "element."

By "recipient society" we mean those members of society who can make or influence policy decisions regarding the educational system. By using the term "largely determined" we make allowance for other determining factors such as new circumstances, acculturative influences outside the formal school system, persisting socio-cultural attitudes, ideals, etc. The term "functions" includes outcomes which may be considered, depending on the criteria employed by the observer, as "functional," "non-functional," or "dysfunctional."

We might point out at this juncture that the apparent circularity of the hypothesis is not a logical circularity since a time factor is involved.

Our generalization differs significantly from that offered by Nicholas Hans: "Thus education, from being a function of national character, became itself a factor in moulding it."[2] Hans based his generalization on comparative studies of education in industrialized countries, and it no longer requires demonstration. However, in newly independent nations, the process is, in a way, reversed, and the study of this process has barely begun.[3]

Like Hans' statement, the basic generalization of this study illustrates the interaction between a society and its educational system over time. Following a formulation by Professor Paul R. Hanna[4] which borrows from economics and from the communication sciences, the transfer of formal education from France to the Congo (Brazzaville) can be described thus:

I. INPUT French society, through government and missionary agencies, decided what ideas, values, attitudes and skills were appropriate for the Congolese to acquire. These ideas, etc., translated into curricula became the "message" to be communicated. Structures and methodology selected were those thought most likely to insure effective communication of the message. The "input" just described operated at the intentional level.

---

[2] Nicholas Hans, Comparative Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1930), p. 10.

[3] See Philip J. Foster's "The Transfer of Educational Institutions: The Ghana Case Study" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1961).

[4] Paul R. Hanna, "Conventional and Unconventional Education in Newly Developed Countries," in America's Emerging Role in Overseas Education, ed. Clarence Hunnicutt (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1962).

II. THROUGHPUT The intended message was modified in the process of communication since a) the nature and quality of the structures and of the educational materials, e.g., school buildings, textbooks, etc., may have differed from those in the intended input; b) the persons conveying the message may have differed in their understandings of what was to be communicated; c) the Congolese's perception of the message may have modified the message's content in unexpected ways.

III. OUTPUT The process produced changes in Congolese behavior at the individual and at the social levels. In educational studies output is characteristically measured by achievement tests, and of course, certain levels of achievement are rewarded by promotion to the next grade or by a certificate or diploma. More recently educational output has been related to national economy. All of these measures largely ignore pupils who do not pass the tests. More important, they ignore many other areas of behavior, such as values and attitudes, which are part of the "total output" and which are critical elements for adequate "feedback"--the effect of past and current output on future input.

Thus, generalizations, values, attitudes, and skills acquired by the recipient society as a result of the transfer of an educational system become part of the human capital of the changed society, and the nature and quality of this capital largely determines decisions regarding the present and future orientation of the transferred educational institutions.

Methods and Sources

Since the transfer of educational institutions from France to the Congo (Brazzaville) had been a continuous process since the arrival in the Congo of de Brazza and Bishop Augouard in the early 1880's, this study must be set in an historical framework. Since no history of education in the Congo is presently available, much of this study is devoted to the reconstruction of the main educational events which took place and to their socio-political context. While this part of the study may not always conform to the standards of historical writing, the description and interpretation of the present Congolese school system rely heavily on modern methods of social science research. The method of approach is definitely comparative in that the problem is studied at different stages of development, and the results are presented in such a way as to facilitate further comparative treatment.

The search for evidence in support or refutation of this thesis is pursued at three levels: educational policy, educational practice, and educational outcome.

Educational policy (the "intentional input" level) involves both the identification of the aims of institutional transfer over time and the identification of the educational structures and methods thought appropriate for the stated task. The main sources of data in this area are policy statements, legislative and administrative decrees, reports, etc. issued by individuals and bodies responsible for making or influencing institutional decisions.

Educational practice (the "throughput" level) involves the identification of structures and methods actually transferred together with their subsequent modifications, an identification of educational functions actually performed, and a search for instances where the throughput or process level shows a lack of correspondence to the intentional level. Data will be supplied by surveys of programs of studies, textbooks, descriptions of teaching methods, and examinations of statistical and evaluative reports. The reports studied will be not only those prepared by French government officials and missionary representatives but also documents reflecting French as well as Congolese public opinion.

Educational outcome (the "output" level) will be estimated quantitatively on the basis of statistical reports of schools, teachers, pupils, certificates and diplomas awarded at various school levels and qualitatively through instruments designed to assess the beliefs, values and attitudes of the present generation of Congolese school children. Tests and questionnaires adapted to this study include: 1) a survey of the vocational aspirations of sixth and tenth graders, of the reasons motivating their occupational choices, and of the preferred setting (urban or rural) for their chosen occupations; 2) a sociometric investigation of tribal and religious influences on the voluntary associations of school children for work and play; 3) an analysis of values as revealed by responses to projective tests. The results of the social and psychological studies conducted by Georges Balandier and his associates at the Institut d'Etudes Centrafricannes (Brazzaville) will also provide corroborating evidence for the assessment of qualitative outcomes of formal education in the Congo.

Finally the author will attempt an evaluation of both the French educational performance in the Congo and the effectiveness with which the emerging Congolese nation is making instrumental use of its inherited school system.

Translations from French language sources are the author's; he assumes responsibility for their accuracy and style.

THE SETTING

That part of Africa known today as the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) has borne various names in the past three-quarters of a century. When first explored by Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza in 1875, it was considered an extension of the French colonial outpost, Cape Lopez. In 1883, when de Brazza was appointed "Commissioner of the Government of the French Republic in West Africa," he set out to take effective possession and further explore the territories between the Congo River and the equator. The Treaty of Berlin (February 26, 1885) recognized French rights over an area designated as the "French Congo" in order to differentiate it from the Belgian King Leopold II's "Congo Free State" (later the "Belgian Congo"). As French explorations were pursued east and north toward the sources of the Congo River's tributaries, the French Congo was divided in 1903, for administrative purposes, into three colonies (Gabon, Moyen-Congo, and Oubangui) and one military territory (Tchad). Despite frequent but relatively minor border changes, it is essentially the colony of Moyen-Congo which became the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) on August 15, 1960; the term "Congo" will be used throughout this paper to designate this colony.

The Land

The Congo lies astride the Equator--between the fourth degree of north latitude and the fifth degree of south latitude and between the eleventh and eighteenth degrees of longitude east of Greenwich. Its area, 342,000 square kilometers, is slightly larger than that of the state of New Mexico. On the southwest the Congo has a short strip (120 miles) of Atlantic coast. To the west, an irregular border separates it from the Republic of Gabon while to the north lie the Cameroon and Central African Republic. From the northeast corner of the Congo to a point southwest of the Stanley-Pool, the Oubangui and Congo rivers form a natural boundary. The southern side touches two enclaves on the right bank of the Congo River: part of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville) and Cabinda (Portuguese Congo).

The Congo's relief is best described by first pointing to a complex of low mountains and plateaus which occupy most of its southwestern half. These plateaus form a knot separating a vast plain from the sea. But thirty miles from the sea, a last folded mountain barrier runs along the coast. The main physical regions of the Congo, moving east then north from the Atlantic Ocean, can be summarized as follows: a narrow coastal plain; the Mayoumbé Mountains (1000 to 2500 feet high); the Niari Valley, a savannah region extending to the sources of the

Kouilou-Niari River and its tributaries; the plateaus (Cataracts, Babembe, Batéké), averaging altitudes of 1200 to 1500 feet; and the western portion of the Congo Basin, the "cuvette congolaise," a vast plain lower than 1200 feet, covered by a network of rivers, all tributaries of the Congo River.

The Congo, entirely equatorial, varies little in climate throughout the year. Temperatures remain close to 72°F with slightly wider variations in the plateau regions. The average annual rainfall is 60 to 80 inches and the humidity remains high.

Although situated within the great equatorial forest belt, only half of the Congo is covered by forests; the other half, because of the nature of the soil and the altitude, forms a grassy savannah dotted by tree groves. Dense forests cover the Mayombe Mountains, the northern half of the plateaus, and the "cuvette congolaise" from the equator to the north. The savannah covers the coastal plain, the Niari Valley, the southern half of the plateaus, and the "cuvette congolaise" south of the Equator.

The sight of the luxuriant equatorial forest and of the tall savannah grass suggests the existence of very rich soils. Contrary to this visual suggestion, Congo soils are characterized by high acidity, low phosphorus content, and a very thin layer of humus. The soil of the plateaus is sandy to considerable depths; that of the "cuvette congolaise" is mostly alluvial, improving in fertility but often marshy near the rivers; much of the rest is composed of heavy clay.

The Natural Resources

The preceding discussion suggested the variety and extent of the natural resources of the Congo.

Covering more than half the land, the forests are rich in commercial species. Soft woods suitable for construction and plywood include the limba and okoumé; hard woods--ebony, mahogany, and iroko--suitable for cabinetmaking are also available. However, several difficult problems prevent full exploitation of this wealth: 1) wide dispersion of the valuable trees; 2) difficulty in identification because of the dense foliage of the underbrush; 3) low population density of the forest area; 4) lack of transportation facilities; and 5) the instability of the demand on local and export markets. Despite such difficulties and the resultant high costs of production, the forest remains the main wealth of the Congo, making up some sixty per cent of the total value of exports.

Products of wild plants constitute the second greatest wealth of the Congo. Oil palm groves cover large areas in the Kouilou-Niari Valley and in the low regions of the "cuvette." Some plants, such as the raphia type palm tree, "pounga," and urena, are gathered for their fibers. Wild rubber, obtained from lianas or trees, although once the chief export of the Congo, is rarely gathered at the present time.

In spite of the generally poor quality of the soils, the Congo produces an impressive variety of crops. The local staple food, manioc, is grown almost everywhere. Bananas also represent an important contribution to the diet of the population. A few other crops bring a welcome complement to the basic diet: peanuts, sweet potatoes, yams, corn, beans, onions, and red peppers. Around European population centers, a variety of vegetables, citrus fruits, and pineapples are grown for the local market.

Cash crops include peanuts, coffee, cocoa, sugar cane, bananas, tobacco, and oil palm products. Since the cultivation of these plants is still at the experimental stage, their present total value is small. However, they already account for a sizable share of the country's exports.

The prevalence of the tsetse fly used to rule out the possibility of introducing cattle and horses to the Congo. Since World War II, great efforts have been made to eradicate this pest. Too, acclimatized animals require special health care and often need fodder not previously available in the Congo. All of these matters demand a level of technical knowledge very few Congolese possess at this time. However, the herds are steadily growing; pigs, goats and sheep are also increasing in number.

None of Africa's famed mining regions lie within the Congo territory. However, in the mountainous region formed by the southern portion of the plateaus, the local population was exploiting deposits of copper, zinc, lead and iron long before the arrival of Europeans. French and Belgian companies have worked those same deposits, particularly in the Mindouli area, for over fifty years. For various reasons, such as quantity and quality of deposits, costs of operation and transportation, or the state of the world markets for these metals, production has never reached high levels. At present, the Congo's mining activities are chiefly confined to the exploitation of minor deposits of lead and zinc in the M'Fouati area. The recent recognition of deposits of phosphates and rock salt in the Mayoumbé region and on the coastal plain may soon justify rather large-scale exploitation.

Small reserves of oil and natural gas have been discovered at Pointe Indienne, in the Pointe-Noire area. Crude oil has already been exported in small quantities. However, known oil and natural gas reserves are very small. Water resources may constitute the largest source of potential power. One hydroelectric power plant is already in operation on the Djoué River five miles from Brazzaville. More important perhaps, the Congo possesses a dam site, the Sounda Gorge on the Kouilou River, which promises to produce electric power at prices comparable to those in Canada and Norway. The Kouilou project would supply enough power to make possible the development of a vast electrometallurgical and electrochemical industrial complex in the Pointe-Noire area. Other rivers, such as the Loémé in the Mayoumbé, could also be harnessed. But with the small Djoue dam currently operating at less than one-third of its capacity, the decision regarding further development of hydroelectric power depends on whether huge capital investments in industrial plants will be available in order to create sufficient demand for power.

Industrial development in the Congo is embryonic and is mostly concerned with the primary processing of raw materials. Palm, palmetto, and peanut oil mills, for example, are operating in crop-producing areas. A modern sugar refinery in the Niari Valley fills most of the refined sugar needs. The staple food, manioc, is still processed by hand. Although most of the Congo's timber is still exported as logs, there are a few sawmills, and veneers and plywood are made in Pointe-Noire. Lead and zinc ores are exported after very little treatment.

Some light industry of a secondary character exists in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire: a brewery, a soft drink bottling plant, a modern cigarette factory, scores of small furniture factories, soap factories, and a fish cannery.

Various types of workshops are equipped to maintain and repair the existing machinery, especially the materiel needed for transportation: bicycles, automobiles and trucks, railroad equipment, airplanes, ships and boats.

Due to its key geographic position, the Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire area has a well-developed communication and transportation network. All river traffic in the Congo basin starts or ends at Stanley-Pool (Brazzaville or Leopoldville). Brazzaville owes its very existence to this fact. Between the Pool and the Atlantic coast, a railroad and a motor road were built in order to bypass the Congo rapids. The site of Pointe-Noire was selected as the western terminal of the Congo-Océan Railroad, and a modern port was created there to handle the passenger and goods traffic moving in and out of the northern portion of the Congo basin. The seat of the federal government, Brazzaville is a post, telegraph and telephone center; it has one of the best international airports and the second most powerful radio station in tropical Africa.

By contrast, the motor-road network is still embryonic, consisting of a few hundred miles of all-weather roads. This is partly explained by the fact that a railroad already connects Brazzaville to the coast and that the Congo River and its tributaries afford the easiest and cheapest means of penetration into the "cuvette congolaise."

To provide the reader with an opportunity to view quickly the variety of natural resources existing in the Congo and to suggest the order of their importance, statistics are offered in Appendix I.

The People

According to the most recent demographic investigation, the total population of the Republic of the Congo is about 820,000[1] or a population density of about 2.4 inhabitants per square kilometer (.386 square mile). The population, however, is very unevenly distributed. Population density gradually increases from a low of less than one per square kilometer in the northern forests, to a high of more than 20 in the metropolitan Brazzaville area. From there to the west, it decreases again to about four per square kilometer. As in most extensive areas of tropical Africa, the population of the Congo is made up of different races, ethnic groups, and tribes. This section will attempt to give a short description of these ethnic groups and to draw a summary picture of their cultural characteristics.

If the term race is understood as referring to the great divisions of the human species, only two races form the indigenous population of the Congo: the Pygmoid and the Negroid.

It is very difficult to say how many Pygmies live in the Congo. Most authors do not even venture a guess. Soret, for example, in his ethnic map of French Equatorial Africa, simply indicates by shaded spots the approximate locations of the pygmy tribes.[2] It is probable that not more than 10,000 Pygmies live in the Congo.

Relatively little is known about their customs and social organization. They have no fixed residence. Being hunters and gatherers, they live in forest clearings and move about in groups of twenty to one hundred from one hunting area to another. The Pygmies tend to attach themselves to groups of Negro farmers with whom they establish a symbiotic relationship--borrowing their language, exchanging the products of their hunting and gathering for domestic tools and hunting weapons.

The Pygmies are believed to have been once the sole inhabitants of most of the Congo basin. For various reasons, particularly because they were not organized for warfare and their ecological adaptation allowed only a relatively low population density, the Pygmies could not resist the repeated waves of Bantu Negroes who invaded their territory beginning about two thousand years ago. Today, the last surviving

---

1. "Enquête Démographique 1960-61--Résultats Provisoires," (Brazzaville, République du Congo, Service de Statistique, 1961), p. 19. (Mimeographed.)

2. Marcel Soret, "Carte Ethno-démographique de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise (Note préliminaire)," reprinted from Bulletin Institut d'Etudes Centrafricaines, Nouvelle Série, Brazzaville, No. 11, 1956, pp. 27-52.

bands are largely acculturated to their Bantu neighbors' way of life. In the north of the Congo, some groups have accepted the missionaries and the Administration. In the Ouesso area (Northern Congo), some have even accepted work as laborers on the big oil-palm plantations, and their children attend the schools.

All the rest of the indigenous ethnic groups belong to the great Bantu-speaking population of tropical Africa. But there ends their cultural unity. Murdock[3] conjectures that this area is occupied by tribes which began to spread from a point near the Cameroon-Nigeria border about two thousand years ago. Murdock believes that this migration, one of the greatest in history, was accomplished in successive waves over a few hundred years. The present Congo tribes may thus all be Bantu, but yet they are clearly differentiated and fall into three main ethnic groups, subdivided into more than seventy tribes.

In the north of the country reside the Equatorial Bantu. They are sometimes classified into two subgroups: the Sangha, from the area north of the Equator (from 4° north latitude), and the M'Bochi, from the Equator south to about two degrees. This line marks the separation between the two types of kinship affiliation recognized throughout tropical Africa: the patrilineal and the matrilineal rules of descent. Among Bantu tribes ". . . matrilineal descent prevailed generally in the not very distant past,"[4] but today the Equatorial Bantu adhere to the patrilineal rule, while their neighbors to the south adhere to matrilineal rule. However, there are clear signs that these too are slowly adopting patrilineal rule. The members of the main Equatorial Bantu tribes number about 125,000 altogether.

The Northwestern Bantu (southern cluster)[5] are represented in the Congo by the Batéké group and its several subgroups. The Batéké occupy the plateaus to which they have given their name. They are over 150,000 in number.

The Batéké were the first Congolese to come into contact with the French in 1879. Loosely organized as a kingdom (Anzico), the Bateke were under heavy attack by the Sundi from the south and the Boubangui from the north at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They lost against the Sundi but won in the second case, exacting tribute from the Boubangui. Their king, the Makoko, signed a treaty with de Brazza giving him, and France, a precious legal claim to the strategic Pool area.

---

3. George Peter Murdock, Africa, Its Peoples and Their Culture History (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), pp. 271-274.

4. Ibid., p. 27.

5. Ibid., p. 275.

The Central Bantu (Kongo cluster)[6] are represented in the Congo by several tribes which form, by far, the most important single ethnic group in the nation. This group has been longest in contact with the Europeans, it is generally more advanced, and it has certainly been the most thoroughly studied of all the Congo peoples. Marcel Soret provides an excellent, detailed ethnographic monograph on this group.[7]

The Kongo group is believed to form at least 45% of the total population of the Congo, although they occupy only 15% of its area. This would indicate that the Kongo accounts for about 400,000 of the 820,000 Congolese.

The Socio-Cultural Background. As noted earlier, the tribes of the Congo have not attracted equal degrees of attention from historians and social scientists. The group which has received the most attention is the Kongo. As early as the sixteenth century, many travelers and missionaries described the coastal tribes; during the modern colonial period, reports of administrative and missionary action were chiefly concerned with the peoples of the same area; then, in 1921, Father Van Wing published his classic Etudes Ba-Kongo; more recently, in the 1950's, Balandier, Soret, and others have made significant contributions to the scientific knowledge of the Kongo. No such body of literature exists concerning the other groups.

At the beginning of this century, Doctor Cureau[8] gave detailed descriptions of native customs, but not on a tribe-by-tribe basis. In the 1930's, Georges Bruel, in his classic, La France Equatoriale Africaine,[9] made extensive use of Cureau's writings as supplements to his own personal knowledge of the area. Thus, on the basis of the writings of Van Wing, Cureau, Bruel, Balandier, and Soret, it is possible to sketch the cultural characteristics of the Congolese tribes, keeping in mind that the generalizations often apply more specifically to the Kongo group, and pointing out differences when they are known to exist between the Kongo and the Téké on the one hand, and the northern tribes on the other hand.

Languages. Vernacular languages in the Congo are all Bantu, one

---

6. Ibid.

7. Marcel Soret, Les Kongo Nord-Occidentaux (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959).

8. Adolphe Cureau, Les Sociétés Primitives de l'Afrique Equatorial (Paris: Armand Colin, 1912).

9. Georges Bruel, La France Equatoriale Africaine (Paris: Larose, 1935).

of the seven divisions of the Bantoid subfamily of the Negritic stock.[10] But each of the various tribes has its own "language" or dialect which resembles its neighbor's and is more or less understandable to members of other tribes. None of these various dialects has spread significantly beyond the particular tribal group to which it belongs.

The geographical isolation of the various Congolese tribes which has produced such a diversification of languages was not absolute, and frequent contacts were indeed established between tribes. To facilitate trade, or contacts in general, vehicular languages were developed which spread over larger areas. Thus, Monokotuba is understood in the southern half of the Congo, from Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire; Lingala is spoken from Brazzaville to the northeast. Monokotuba and Lingala are simplified tongues, belonging to no particular tribe, but made up of linguistic elements borrowed from local languages.

Social structure. The identification of ethnic groups of subgroups is inferred from the observation of certain similarities in the languages, beliefs, customs, etc., of a group of individuals. Such groups or subgroups do not necessarily exist as social or political units within well-defined territorial limits. This is often also true at the tribal and clan levels. Such is the case in the Congo: there is no Vili, or Bembe, or Laadi "Chief" (three tribes of the Kongo cluster). However, one should point out, for instance, that a Vili is conscious of being a Vili, but that he may call himself a Kongo when he is outside of his birthplace.[11] In any case, marriage is traditionally endogamous at the level of the tribe. Marriage becomes exogamous in the small groupings called "clan," "subclan," or "extended family." The latter is the basic social cell, perhaps the only one which has effective existence nowadays. The extended family is made up of all the individuals related by blood to one living patriarch recognized as the chief. Among the Kongo and the Téké, where the matrilineal rule of kinship prevails, the headman (Nkazi) is the representative of the oldest woman of the oldest generation, usually her brother or her maternal uncle. Among the northern tribes, the headman is, in principle, the oldest man of the family group.

The extended family constitutes a social, economic and juridical unit within which the individual is largely absorbed. The headman manages the family's property, oversees all transactions (including marriages), and administers justice. He is the one closest to the ancestors, the immediate source of the vital powers of the family. According to Balandier,[12] the maintenance of the "fundamental link land-property-lineage under an effective family head" is mainly responsible for the Kongo's remarkable stability as a social group subjected to the strains of the "colonial situation."

---

[10] Murdock, op. cit., p. 15.

[11] Soret, op. cit., p. 72.

[12] Georges Balandier, Sociologie Actuelle de l'Afrique Noire-Dynamique

Marriage is negotiated outside the extended family, and calls for the payment of a bride-price to the woman's maternal uncle (in Kongo and Téké groups); resident is virilocal (i.e., the couple lives in the husband's village), but the children belong to the wife's family which they join before adolescence. Kin groups are defined after two basic coordinates: blood and seniority. "Ego" is first related to his mother, to his sisters and to his father's other wives. All those are "mothers." The kinship class next in importance is the uncle-nephew relationship. Then come the brothers, sisters, and cousins, all in the same class. On the paternal side, among the Kongo, only the father is believed to transmit part of his blood to his child and the grandfather may marry his granddaughter. Domestic slaves were not members of the family, but rather of the "community." Their children remained in the father's family instead of returning to the slave mother's family.

Religion, Cults, and Magic. In attempting to describe a society's indigenous culture the ethnographer is faced with the difficult problem of locating a cultural baseline, since most societies, if not all, have been in contact with others at some points in their history. The Congolese are no exception. The Kongo group, in particular, have been in contact with the Portuguese since the fifteenth century, and for two hundred years after that, Christian missions flourished in the Kongo Kingdom. With the decline of the Portuguese Empire, missionary action practically ceased. Today, thanks to the work of Father Van Wing, much is known of this group's religious beliefs and practices. Van Wing paraphrases a Kongo song which he believes well expresses the Kongo philosophy:

> On Earth is man with his recurrent needs to be satisfied. Above him, Nzambi is the invisible sovereign master, unapproachable. He has put man on earth, and he will take him away one day through death, which lurks everywhere, taking, inexorably, young or old. Against this sovereign Nzambi there is no recourse; one cannot take away anything from him by force or by trick. However, there exists another power superior to men, that of the manes, that is, of the ancestors of the clan. This power is generally favorable, or at least can be made so through sacrifices, libations and prayers. If the ancestors remain decidedly hostile, one can use the fetishes, which Nzambi has given to men in order to neutralize

---

des Changements Sociaux en Afrique Central (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), p. 396.

evil action. The magical rites of the fetishers have indeed an effect on man, on beasts, on the manes of the ancestors, on everything except on Nzambi.[13]

The Kongo believed in Nzambi before the arrival of the first missionaries. But was their conception of this Supreme Being the same before Christian influence? No one is certain. In any case, Nzambi plays for the Kongo the two main functions which Malinowsky attributes to the supernatural: the explanatory function and the validating function. The "explanatory" function is clearly shown in the above quotation. Nzambi also carries out his "validating" function: Nzambi has given laws and he sanctions them; their violation is a sin against Nzambi and such a sin is punished by him.[14] For instance, Nzambi commands one to respect parents, to help neighbors, to avoid incest, etc. But if Nzambi punishes, he never rewards. When the good die, they join the underground villages of the ancestors; the bad are denied entrance into these villages and are condemned to wander as ghosts. But the ancestors themselves, not Nzambi, separate the good from the bad.

Although this concept of the Supreme Being is rather vague,[15] one is scarcely justified in saying that the Kongo are simple animists, a characteristic often attributed to them as well as to most pagan Africans. This has prompted Ziégle[16] to suggest that the term "pantheist" better describes the Congolese.

In fact, Nzambi remains a distant Providence whose direct intervention rarely affects the daily life of the Congolese. But the spirits of ancestors are very much present, since these hold the keys to the "treasure chest"--to the objects of man's desires: good health for himself and his family, longevity, prosperity, and fertility. Therefore, ancestors must be respected, obeyed, implored, and sometimes appeased. This is the fundamental cult of the Congolese.

Properly treated, the spirits of the ancestors are generally benevolent. But the spirits of bad ancestors and those of rival clans are to be feared: they are the "ndoki," responsible for all misfortunes. The "ndoki" must be fought with more powerful spirits, and this is where magic (fetishism) intervenes. In times of rapid change and consequent social disruption, it is natural that this aspect of the cult assumes precedence. European observers have come at such a time; they are themselves disturbing elements. It is understandable that they have emphasized this aspect of the Congolese religious rites.

---

[13] J. Van Wing, Etudes Ba-Kongo, Sociologie, Religion et Magie (2nd ed.; Bruxelles: Desclee de Brouwer, 1959), p. 301. First ed.: Etudes Ba-Kongo, "Histoire et Sociologie," Bibliotheque Congo, No. 3 (1921).

[14] Ibid., p. 302.

[15] Pressed for details regarding Nzambi's attributes the Kongo are likely to answer: "Nzambi is Nzambi."

[16] Henri Ziegle, Afrique Equatorial Francaise (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1952), p. 82.

Ancestor worship can do without a clergy, but it requires "interpreters," men adept at communicating with the dead and learning the wishes of the ancestors. These are the "fetishers" or "nganga nkisi," masters of a fetish (nkisi), that is, of an artificial object presumably possessed of the powerful spirit of the dead. Fetishism should not be confused with sorcery. A fetish is expected to work for the good of someone, bringing him the object of his desires or protecting him against the malificent action of an enemy. Sorcery is deliberately used against someone, supposedly without provocation, and it is a crime punishable by death. While sorcerers were burned, fetishers are powerful and respected members of the community.

Most authors insist that religion is not merely an aspect of Congolese culture, it is Congolese culture. In view of this remark, one may be surprised to learn that in urban centers, fewer than 15% of the Congolese admit that they are fetishists.[17] The Christian churches do not claim to have converted the remaining 85%. In fact, statistics regarding the percentage of Congolese population converted to Christianity would be of little value: in the majority of cases, Christian beliefs and practices are not substituted for traditional religion but are only added to it. A Christian priest, for example, is often called "Nganga Nzambi." Fetishes retain their power over the Congolese, especially when the situation is such that the level of anxiety among the population is raised.

Psychological and Personality Characteristics and Cultural Transmission. If anthropologists have extensively studied African tribes, psychologists, on the other hand, have barely started applying their recently developed analytic tools to the study of the African personality: ". . . at the present time no generalization concerning African personality could be made, as such a generalization [is] bound to become too wide and to be devoid of both practical and theoretical value."[18] Of the Congolese personality, no wide-scope psychological study has yet been published. However, some indications can be gathered from the writings of early observers and from some recent investigations. The former sources have more historical than scientific value, but they are important since they influenced the native policy of the colonizers.

---

[17] Marcel Soret, Démographie et Problemes Urbains en A.E.F., Poto-Poto, Baconga, Dolisie (Brazzaville: Institut d'Etudes Centrafricaines, Memoire No. 7, 1954). (Memorandum.)

[18] S. Bieshuvel, Report of the CSA Meeting of Specialists on the

Adolphe Cureau, a doctor and colonial administrator, has carefully described the Congolese as he saw them at the beginning of the century.[19] His basic assumptions and his terminology were those of his time. Thus he wrote of the Congolese's intellectual and moral "faculties":

> One trait dominates the psychology of the Negro: mobility, lack of consistency of impressions and feelings which barely graze his conscience without leaving more than a fleeting mark. This is a defect of stability or of intellectual and moral memory.[20]

On the subject of mental development Cureau stated:

> At the age of twelve or fifteen, the faculties of our native, at first receptive enough, become dull and his understanding becomes dim. He retreats and settles down in his primitive infantilism. From that moment on, he will not improve beyond the point where the rapid progress of his first years had taken him. Even he who has received a European education will retain only its varnish, a purely external appearance which covers up the intimate web of his simple soul without transforming it.[21]

And further:

> The things that are taught him remain sterile, for they do not find, below the level of a short memory and a superficial understanding, the subconscious but fertile elements which constitute genius, talent, or simple but true intelligence.[22]

Félicien Challaye's opinion on the same subject was not based on as long and careful observation, but because he expressed it at a time

---

Basic Personality Structure of African and Madagascan Populations, Tananarive, August 27-September 3, 1959 (London: CCTA/CSA, Publication No. 51), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

19. Cureau, *op. cit.*

20. Quoted by Bruel, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

22. *Ibid.*

when French public opinion was alerted by the investigative mission of de Brazza in 1905, it may have had more influence on the shaping of native policy. Challaye was in basic agreement with Cureau. He failed to see in the Congolese any deep feeling, any art, science, or genuine religion. He went further in suggesting an explanation for these "facts":

> An individual born in a small isolated village receives no education from his parents, owes no tradition to his ancestors; deprived of help from those around him, and from those who have preceded him, he has no opportunity to develop his intellectual and emotional faculties. Reduced to his own experience, he remains a child all his life. These primitive races, without a past, belong to prehistory: they are anterior to all civilization.[23]

He found in this situation no reason to despise the Congolese, but, like Cureau and others, he advised kindness and patience:

> . . . [we] should not ask too much of them. It is impossible to suddenly impose intensive work on races accustomed for centuries to doing nothing; it would be absurd to impose immediately upon savages the same social obligations required of civilized people.[24]

The opinions just reported, with their elements of truth, and with their naive quality--as judged from the point of view of present-day anthropology and psychology--have been accepted as fact until recently. Today, social scientists propose very different generalizations based on a new set of assumptions and scientifically controlled research. But no such research has been carried out among a representative sample of Congolese tribes. In any case, it may now be too late to attempt a scientific description of the Congolese at a "cultural baseline" since most Congolese have reached varying degrees of acculturation. Soret, for instance, has very little to offer beyond the statement that: "The education of children is carried out mostly through imitation of elders."[25] But he also attributes to the Kongo group:

> . . . a highly developed tendency to imitate, a fertile imagination often revealed in theatrical or musical works, through real "studies" of village life or of the relations between Blacks

---

[23] Félicien Challaye, "Le Congo Francais," Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Série 7, Cahier 12 (1906), pp. 26-27.

[24] Ibid., p. 32.

[25] Marcel Soret, Les Kongo Nord-Occidentaux (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 101.

and Whites, etc., which bear, in addition, the mark of a great sense of observation and an above-average gift for satire.[26]

It may be useful to report here the conclusions of a study recently conducted in Leopoldville among members of a closely related cultural group.[27] The author has paid careful attention to the effects of interpersonal relations (particularly the child-mother relationship) in the socialization of the Kongo child. In her study of the Kongo mother's attitude toward the child, Knapen was struck by the almost complete absence of deliberate stimulation of the child in the different areas of personality. She observed this "attitude of non-intervention" in various areas: learning how to walk, acquiring sanitary and other habits. Knapen is not inclined to call this attitude "negligent," but rather "protective, permissive, and realistic."[28] At first, the mother adapts herself to the child while a true symbiotic relationship is established between them. Soon, however, the child must adapt to his environment. Weaning causes the child to lose his privileged position, but this event is not brought about for its own sake: the mother expects another child and naturally shifts her attention to this new life. From the time of weaning, the child learns to live with siblings and other clan children; his older sister takes care of him. For the little girls, these are heavy responsibilities which they must accept and carry out early. As the child grows up, he is gradually absorbed into adult life. He finds his place within the clan and learns the attitudes and skills he needs to play his role.

Knapen also points out that this type of child training should not be mistaken for the conscious application of educative techniques specifically oriented to the development of a young personality, but should be seen as a strictly functional adaptation of the child to life in his environment. In conclusion, Knapen hypothesizes that because of the general direction of the Kongo educative system:

> . . . one of the most fundamental tendencies of personality development in the group studied is the gradual acquiring of facts, skills, value judgements, feelings and a motivational system which causes the individual's accomplishments to coincide with the welfare of the clan and his assumed role to coincide as much as possible with service to the community.[29]

---

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[27] Marie-Thérèse Knapen, *L'Enfant Mu-Kongo: Orientation de Base du Système Educatif et Développement de la Personnalité* (Louvain: Editions E. Neuwelearts, 1962).

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

In the absence of comparable studies in the Congo, there is no certainty that this hypothesis can be applied to the cultural groups living north of the Congo River, much less to the non-Kongo tribes. However, the similarities in features reported by social scientists from widely separated areas of the Bantu world tend to support the validity of the following generalizations:

1) Tradition-directed personality is prevalent in Africa, although the researchers' opinions vary as to the effects of acculturation in this area.

2) The individual's early childhood period is marked by complete security (symbiosis of mother and child).

3) Child-rearing practices differ from the second year onward, with weaning sometimes a traumatic, sometimes a gradual experience. Again, opinions differ as to the effects of such practices on personality development.

4) Ancestor worship is a common feature in African societies. "Views concerning the continued influence of the ancestors in the lives of men, and the need to placate them, probably have a most powerful influence on the development of the self."[30]

5) Affective relations, as they exist in Western society, appear to be generally absent: interpersonal relations seem to be determined largely by the traditional roles the individuals are expected to play.

In summary, it must be noted that the Congolese child grows up in a generally permissive environment which exerts relatively little pressure toward individual achievement. The educative influences to which he is submitted are functional in nature, but very informal. Integration into the social unit for the welfare of the group is the main function of the traditional educational "system." Although experts disagree in their assessment of the true consequences of this "system," its discussion at this point should serve to show the sharp discontinuity between the aims and methods of European-type formal education and the pre-school orientation of the Congolese child.

---

[30] Bieshuvel, op. cit., p. 2.

COLONIZATION

The Congo's Middle Ages: 1500-1850

Documented history of the Congo begins with the discovery by Diego Cam of the mouth of the Congo River in 1482. In the wake of the Portuguese navigators, administrators and missionaries penetrated inland and established a capital at San Salvador, a point southwest of Stanley-Pool, in today's Angola. This was the center of an African kingdom, the Kongo kingdom, established a few generations before the arrival of the Portuguese. Little is known of the exact origin, territorial limits, and political organization of this kingdom whose decline seems to have coincided with the colonial and missionary action of the Portuguese. The search for documents and their interpretation is still actively pursued, encouraged as it is by the legitimate desire of the modern Africans to acquire and preserve reliable knowledge of their historical roots.

The ancient Kongo kingdom, lying mostly in Portuguese Angola and in the ex-Belgian Congo, is only important here because the Kongo tribes of the Congo (Brazzaville) still consider San Salvador as their place of origin and because another kingdom, that of Loango, belonged to Kongo tribes, the Vili, and probably was at some period a vassal state of San Salvador.

The kingdom of Loango, stretching from the Babon to the right bank of the Congo River, and from the Atlantic to the Batéké Plateau, was mostly situated within the present territorial limits of the Congo. Through the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the kingdom of Loango is described as decadent by the missionaries and the slave traders who came into contact with it. Indeed, slave trade may have been the main support of the kingdom during that period. Slave trading posts (baracons) dotted the coast, and through them an estimated six to eight million Africans were shipped to the Americas.[1] The Loango themselves, no more than their eastern neighbors, the Batéké of the kingdom of Anzico, do not appear to have suffered much from the slave trade. On the contrary, their position made them useful intermediaries and predisposed them for their role in future contacts with the Europeans.

The positive contribution of the Europeans (mainly Portuguese) during this four hundred year period is very limited. Their direct action was largely confined to the coasts. However, missionary activity left some traces of religious teachings and, more important perhaps, new world crops including manioc and corn crops were introduced.

---

[1] Marcel Soret, Les Kongo Nord-Occidentaux (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 23.

The First Explorations: 1850-1880

The great European powers had agreed, around 1820, to put an end to the slave trade. Accordingly, the French Navy patrolled the west coast of Africa and established a few posts to serve as supply bases. Thus, the French Admiral Bouet-Willaumez signed treaties with two African "kings," Denis and Louis, on the coast of Gabon. There, in 1848, having seized a slave ship at sea, he brought the slaves back, set them free, and founded the city of Libreville. The French Navy's assignment was to enforce the slave trade ban. But soon Navy officers, scientists, and adventurers, attracted by the mystery of the hinterland, made several short expeditions in the coastal area. Among them, an American of French origin, Paul du Chaillu, even reached the mountainous regions and gave his name to the "Massif du Chaillu."

Most of the expeditions used the course of the river, Ogooué, which, some thought, provided a way into the heart of the continent. Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, an Italian nobleman who had just joined the Navy, was interested in finding out how the large masses of water which fell on Equatorial Africa were evacuated to the sea. He was determined to explore the sources of the Ogooué in order to determine whether the answer to the riddle could be found there.

In 1875, at his insistent request, de Brazza was given 10,000 francs and put in charge of an exploratory mission. He soon discovered the sources of the Ogooué, marched on east to a water divide, and went down the course of another river flowing east, the Alima, a tributary of the Congo River. Hostile tribes soon forced him and his companions to return to Libreville. Back in France, in 1878, he tried unsuccessfully to interest French opinion in his discoveries. But Stanley also returned from Africa and claimed that he had followed the course of the Congo all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, thus completing one of the first crossings of Africa from east to west by a European. Suddenly, the European public began to realize that a new era of great exploration was opening.

The French Equatorial Empire Takes Shape: 1880-1900

De Brazza knew then that the Congo River could be reached by way of the Ogooué-Alima rivers, a route which required portage only over a short distance. He had little difficulty obtaining the French government's approval and support for a second expedition. He arrived in Gabon early in 1880 and set out on his mission, accompanied by a few Senegalese soldiers and scores of native porters. From here on, the events are so numerous that they cannot be described at length here. They will only be listed chronologically, but will be followed by a discussion of the purposes and the policies of the men and the nations involved in this part of the historical drama often described as "The Scramble for Africa."

June, 1880: De Brazza founds Franceville near the source of the Ogooué.

September, 1880: De Brazza reaches the Congo River and meets the Makoko, the Bateke "king."

October, 1880: De Brazza and the Makoko sign a treaty granting France a land concession on the right shores of the Stanley-Pool, between the rivers Djoué and M'Pila, that is, the present location of Brazzaville.

1882: De Brazza returns to the coast from Franceville by way of the Kouilou-Niari Valley, a better route than that of the Ogooué. The French Navy occupies Loango.

1882: France ratifies the treaty signed by de Brazza and the Makoko.

1883: De Brazza is appointed Commissioner of the Government in West Africa and sets out on a triple mission: 1) to create posts and stations along the Ogooué and the Alima; 2) to confirm French rights on the left banks of the Pool, where the Senegalese Sergeant Malimine had been left to represent France; 3) to explore the country to the north.[2]

1884: De Brazza brings back the ratified treaty to the Makoko; his companion, de Chavannes, founds Brazzaville.

1885: The European powers sign the historic Act of Berlin which sets the ground rules for the colonial game in this part of Africa.

1885-1900: France, Belgium, Germany, and Britain stage numerous "scientific" and military expeditions from all directions toward the heart of Africa.

France used the Congo as her main base of operations. The bulk of French resources in men and materiel was diverted to the pursuit of territorial objectives:

---

[2] Pierre Gamache, Géographie et Histoire de L'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1949).

1) Toward the sources of the Sangha River, the northern Congo is occupied;

2) Following the Ubanghi and the Shari, French explorers face the opposition of Moslem populations, but lay the foundations of the present Central African Republic;

3) Toward the Nile, the epic two-year march of Captain Marchand ends in the humiliation of Fashoda: France agrees to leave Britain in control of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan;

4) Toward Chad, three French columns converge: one from the Congo (under Emile Gentil), one from West Africa (under Voulet and Joalland), one from Algeria, across the Sahara (under Fourneau and Lamy). The three expeditions join forces in 1900, fight a last battle against the Sultan Rabah, effectively link the French possessions on the Mediterranean to the lower Congo, and close the period of great colonial expansion in Africa. The new map of Africa is roughly sketched; from then on only minor touches will be added.

It is obvious that the history of Africa during these decisive twenty years must be marked "Made in Europe": in Africa, a handful of daring European explorers, adventurers, soldiers, patriots, empire builders; in Europe, great statesmen, ambitious politicians, humanitarians and unscrupulous businessmen. On the sidelines, but vitally interested in the courses of events, were the Christian missionaries, bent on saving the heathens, often bitterly opposed to colonial policies, but depending on colonial action and lending it powerful support. All of these men fought anti-colonialist groups, swayed an apathetic public opinion and decided the why, how, when and where of colonial action.

In 1875, French pride was still deeply wounded by the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in the Franco-Prussian War. The French colonial empire, in decline for more than a century, was reduced to only a few footholds in different parts of the world. Then a group of politicians led by Jules Ferry saw a way to divert French attention from Alsace-Lorraine, and at the same time to demonstrate French vitality to the world: France would regain prestige and grandeur by conquering a new colonial empire. Discreetly encouraged by Bismarck, France set out to acquire her largest empire in history: Indo-China, North, West and Equatorial Africa.

De Brazza, treated with indifference or open hostility by various groups, particularly by his own naval superiors, found powerful support among this group of "Africanist" politicians. When, in 1882, his treaty with the Makoko came to the National Assembly for ratification, an assemblyman, M. Rouvier, expressed succinctly the classic motives in support of colonial enterprise:

> Our trade will find there rubber, resin, wax, oil seeds, furs, ivory, precious metals and woods; our industry will find outlets

for its products, and at the same time the inhabitants on the banks of this incomparable river will be born to civilization.[3]

Parliament ratified the treaty in November, 1882; de Brazza was appointed Commissioner in West Africa in February, 1883, and was given a subsidy of 1,275,000 francs paid out by various ministries. The Ministry of Public Instruction was made chief sponsor in order to "emphasize the peaceful character of the West Africa Mission."[4] In fact, Jules Ferry, the then Prime Minister, had just held this ministry's portfolio, and was thus in a better position to control the Mission.

But these precautions did not really deceive the rival European powers. It was apparent that Leopold II of Belgium, encouraged by Bismarck and under the cover of the scientific and humanitarian "Association Internationale Africaine," was trying to acquire an African kingdom. Portugal, supported by Britain, was claiming rights over the Congo area, and so was Spain. Bismarck saw a wonderful opportunity to influence events in the direction of his policies, and he invited the rival powers to settle their differences at the Berlin Conference (1884).

The signing of the Act of Berlin by several nations as a result of negotiations may be the single most important event in the history of the Congo. It marked the beginning of a new era in the history of colonization:

1) It prevented Portugal from acquiring a huge part of Africa and confirmed her in a secondary role as a colonial power.

2) It made obsolete the economic privileges of powers like Britain and France in their respective colonies by creating a free trade zone in the Conventional Basin of the Congo.

3) It explicitly made the colonial powers responsible for the welfare of native populations, enjoining them to eradicate slave trade, and to encourage and support the activities of scientific and missionary organizations.

4) For the first time, it recognized the right of smaller, non-colonial powers to be concerned with the modalities and the effects of colonial action.

---

3. Journal Officiel, November 21, 1882, as quoted in Fernand Rouget's L'expansion Coloniale au Congo Francais (Paris: Emile Larose, 1906), p. 32.

4. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

In principle, the provisions of the Act of Berlin should have all worked to the advantage of the Congo and its populations. In fact, to the extent that these provisions could be enforced, they discouraged the French Government and French private interests from investing the long-term development capital which the Congo needed. The Congo venture remained for a long time somewhat dubious in French eyes: it could not fit well within the economic and cultural assimilationist theme, which, with some slight variations, has characterized French colonial policy.

Another provision had a more immediate effect on the Congo. In 1885, the heart of the African continent was still largely a blank map. The colonial powers agreed on the ownership of areas actually explored and occupied, and adopted as a principle of future ownership the effective occupation of much larger and still unexplored areas. As a result, France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, and Italy poured their energy in a mad race to "discover" Africa's heartland. Scores of "scientific expeditions" were sent to the interior by various nations, many of them using encircling movements, each nation trying to confine the others to the coastal areas where they were established. Thus, for the next fifteen years, the Congo was not only deprived of financial and technical help, but had to contribute heavily to the support of several French "missions" to the Nile and to Lake Chad.

During these fifteen years, very little was done to administer or develop the Congo. De Brazza was a sincere friend of the Congolese. He was moved by humanitarian ideals, and he intended to make the natives share fully in the development of the country. While trying to interest French investors in the wealth (he thought) of the Congo, he warned the French that no colonization would succeed unless the rights and privileges of the natives were scrupulously respected. As early as 1886, de Brazza proposed the construction of a railroad from the coast to Brazzaville because he realized that otherwise the burden of transportation would literally fall on the shoulders of thousands of native porters, but by that time, de Brazza was already engulfed by the movement he had helped launch. While the French Government was supporting the heavy cost of military expeditions, often against hostile French public opinion, it felt it could not afford heavier financial sacrifices for the economic and social development of the Congo. Plainly, France had bitten off more than she could chew. After years of controversy, and against the stubborn opposition of de Brazza and his friends, the State abdicated and sold out the Congo to "Chartered Companies." The concessionary regime approved in 1898 became effective in 1900. In all, some 40 companies obtained concessions over more than 90% of the French Congo.[3]

---

[3] Félicien Challaye, "Le Congo Francais," Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Série 7, Cahier 12 (1906), p. 48.

Consolidation and Organization: 1900-1919

If the previous period was one of exploration and expansion, this one from 1900 to 1919 is characterized by a particular form of development and by the administrative organization of the colony. As noted above, there was no question of France taking direct financial responsibility for the administration or the development of the Congo. Colonies were expected "to pay their own way"; therefore, private capital had to be attracted to the Congo. After a propaganda campaign and the early economic success of the Congo Free State such private capital was invested. Thus, the local budgets were fed by initial payments against concessions of monopolies to companies, by receipts from custom duties on goods imported and exported by the same companies, and by head taxes imposed on the natives who were then entering into a monetary economy. But these incomes never succeeded in covering the operating expenses of the colonial administration, let alone contributing to the development of economic and social infrastructure. Therefore, the Metropole had to pay the deficits.

The concessionary regime was an over-all failure. Most of the investors were speculators attracted by promises of quick returns. The wealth of the Congo had been grossly exaggerated; tropical luxuriance had been mistaken for fertility. Huge concessions selected on a map proved to be flooded most of the year, etc. Many companies went bankrupt within a few years. But worse yet were the scandals which were revealed. World public opinion was aroused by tales of inhuman treatment inflicted by company agents on the natives of the Congo Free State. The French public demanded a full-scale investigation into the activities of the French companies which had also incurred the severe criticism of the missionaries. De Brazza, who had been summarily dismissed in 1898, was given special powers by the French Government in April, 1905, and was assigned to investigate the situation. He was taken ill while traveling down the Congo River, and he died before he could return to France and make his report. However, one of the officials accompanying him, Félicien Challaye, has given a good assessment of the regime.[6]

On the positive side: 1) The companies had contributed to the development of the French Congo (their combined capital exceeded sixty million francs). 2) They increased France's share of the Congo imports which went from one-third in 1900 to three-fifths in 1906. 3) The companies' prosperity was closely linked to that of the colony, since their activities and part of their profits supported the local budget.

On the negative side: 1) The companies' existence represented a threat to international peace: their monopolistic privileges were challenged by British traders who claimed that they constituted a violation of the Berlin Agreements. 2) From an economic standpoint, their activities represented the worst form of exploitation: draining the country of existing wealth without regard for future production.[7] 3) The companies must be criticized most severely from the point of view of native policy. As de Brazza had foreseen, the companies' monopoly allowed them to pay very low salaries and to sell their imported goods at many times the real price--sometimes up to 500% of value. Naturally, the natives were not attracted by such conditions. The companies, then, tried to obtain the right to introduce forced labor, invoking the morally elevating value of work, compulsory at first, free later. The Government never granted this right, but it is reported that confidential circulars instructed local administrators to turn the other way when company agents exerted "strong pressures" on the natives. Another circular warned administrators that they would be judged according to the amount in taxes that they collected.

---

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-62.

Challaye's exposé did not bring about the end of the concessionary regime. Indeed, the regime disappeared only in the late twenties following Andre Gidé's exposé.[8] Concessions had been granted for a period of thirty years. It would have cost the Government enormous sums to liquidate the regime earlier. In fact, most companies were so derelict in their obligations that their assets could have been simply confiscated by the Government. This was never done. Instead, Government supervision was slowly improved and, above all, companies were encouraged to renegotiate their concessions voluntarily. Thus, by 1920, as much as 300,000 square kilometers of land had been returned to the State domain in exchange for permanent rights to smaller concessions.[9]

With such inadequate financial resources, an adequate administrative machinery was slow to materialize. As effective occupation of the colony progressed to the north and to the east, new administrative regions were created, with centralization of authority in Brazzaville. Decentralization began to be effected in 1904 with the creation of three colonies: Gabon, Middle Congo, and Ubanghi-Shari, plus one military territory, Chad. But ". . . nothing [was] done without authorization from Brazzaville," where ten chief administrators were appointed in succession between July, 1903, and August, 1905.[10] At last, in 1910, the organization of the Afrique Equatoriale Francaise (A.E.F.) was set up essentially as it was to remain until 1958: a Federal Government headed by a Commissioner-General residing in Brazzaville and Lieutenant Governors in each of the four territories. All power delegated from Paris was in the hands of the Governor General. In the words of the first Governor General, Merlin, addressing the Lieutenant Governors: "I govern; you administer."[11] The Governor General was assisted by a Secretary General, a Cabinet, the Chiefs of the different Bureaus, and, later, by an Advisory Council. The Lieutenant Governors obeyed directives from the Government General, were responsible for drawing up the budgets of their respect territory and for submitting them to the Governor General for approval.

---

[7] For example, in 1904, natural rubber represented 50% and ivory 41% of the exports of the Middle Congo. The various rubber producing plants, however, were destroyed and not replaced; most of the ivory came not from current "production," but from a traditional form of capital accumulation and once the stocks were exhausted, ivory exports decreased to a trickle.

[8] André Gidé, Voyage au Congo (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

[9] G. Froment-Guieyesse, Brazza (Paris: Editions de l'Empire Francais, 1948), p. 138.

The Middle Congo's administrative regime often changed because Brazzaville was at the same time territorial and federal capital. At some periods, it had no Lieutenant Governor, the Governor General or his Secretary General assuming direct responsibility for it. Through the years, the system was characterized by changing degrees of centralization, perhaps reflecting the struggle between the assimilationist and the associationist policies of France toward her colonies.[12] In the thirties, Georges Bruel summed up the history of administrative organization in the Afrique Equatoriale Francaise:

> Since 1883, one can see that the Metropole has hesitated, groped, and dickered as if it had not gained experience in organizing our great overseas territories. These awkward attempts, these successive changes, have considerably hampered and delayed the accomplishments of France, because the archives, the regulations, have been constantly disrupted to the great detriment of administrative operation and of progress.[13]

The year, 1910, could have marked the beginning of progress. But barely a year later, Afrique Equatoriale Francaise played for France the classic role of a pawn on the colonial chessboard. For some time, political chaos in Morocco had been a threat to French Algeria. France

---

10. Challaye, op. cit., p. 82.

11. Henri Ziéglé, Afrique Equatoriale Francaise (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1952), p. 174.

12. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 25.

13. Georges Bruel, La France Equatoriale Africaine (Paris: Larose, 1935), p. 436.

decided to eliminate the threat by establishing a Protectorate over the country, but met with the opposition of Spain, Britain and Germany who also had plans for Morocco. By 1911 France had reached agreement with Spain and Britain, but still had to deal with Germany which was threatening war over the dispute. On the other hand, Germany, in her colony of Cameroon, wanted direct access to Lake Chad and to the Congo River. In exchange for "freedom of action" in Morocco, France transferred to Germany some 300,000 square kilometers of A.E.F. territory, mostly in Chad and Ubanghi-Shari, but also in the Middle Congo. There, Germany obtained land on both sides of the Sangha River from the Cameroon to the Congo River. This last concession did not actually represent a very great economic loss, but the psychological effects of the transaction were undoubtedly enormous.

Ironically, it was during this period that France granted A.E.F. a loan of 171 million francs for railroad construction. While more technical studies were being made of the best route, World War I broke out and work on the project was postponed.

After an eighteen months' campaign, British, French and Belgian forces were victorious over the Germans in the Cameroon. The colony was shared by France and Britain. The Treaty of Versailles ratified these arrangements by which the parts of Afrique Equatoriale Francaise territory ceded to Germany in 1911 were returned to France.

Between the Wars: 1919-1940

The loyalty of the natives of Afrique Equatoriale Francaise during the trying years of the First World War helped produce in France a climate of opinion favorable to policies tending to benefit this part of Africa. But more important, perhaps, was the appointment of Albert Sarraut as the Minister of Colonies. This former colonial administrator (Indo-China) is chiefly responsible for drawing up France's first overall colonial development plan, one in which ". . . moral, intellectual, political and social improvements were intimately linked to material achievements."[14] By that time, the French theory of colonial relationship to the Metropole had rejected the idea of assimilation as an "optical illusion" and adopted the motto "association." Difficult to define, this policy represented a compromise between assimilation and protectorate through indirect rule; it recognized an initial inequality among colonial partners, but resolutely sought to elevate the less developed members to a point where an association of truly equal members could become possible.

---

[14] Albert Sarraut, La Mise en Valeur des Colonies Francaises (Paris: Payot, 1923), p. 83.

Based on the policy of association, Sarraut's colonial development plan was devised on the following strategy:

1) Create the means of access to centers of production--build roads and railways, etc.

2) Equip ports.

3) Increase productivity of present enterprises and develop new areas. Improve the quantity, value and variety of the products of soil through irrigation, mechanization, and rational exploitation.

4) Above all, improve hygiene, food habits, medical assistance; educate an adequate manpower; win the interested and confident cooperation of the populations.[15]

Within this grand design, Afrique Equatoriale Francaise, always the "colonial Cinderella," occupied a very minor position. A.E.F.'s economic needs were concerned with the very first steps of the development strategy: creation of the means of access, that is, railroads, ports, etc. At last, work started in 1920 on the construction of the Congo-Océan Railroad. For the next fourteen years this long delayed undertaking, and the construction of the port of Pointe-Noire, was to monopolize financial and human resources. Completion required the expenditure of several times the funds originally earmarked. The human cost was also very high: thousands of laborers were more or less forced to work on the project, often under very poor conditions. The inadequacy of local labor in quantity and quality even prompted an unsuccessful attempt at using indentured workers from the Far East. But for A.E.F. development, the Congo-Océan with its two terminals, Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville, constituted a great step forward, although it did not represent an ideal solution for Chad and Ubanghi-Shari. At least, it greatly benefited Middle Congo on whose territory all the construction work was done. Once again, this colony's geographic position proved

From 1935 to 1940, efforts were made, particularly by Governor General Reste, to move on to the next step in economic and social development. Agriculture and education received Reste's closest attention. But, again, the Second World War stopped the implementation of rational plans, even if it gave A.E.F. "its greatest hour."

From World War II to Independence: 1940-1960

When France capitulated to the Germans in 1939, Governor General Boisson put the colony under the authority of Vichy. Soon the French

---

[15] Ibid., pp. 343-344.

Congo, for the second time in history, was to be saved for France by a black Frenchman. Félix Eboue, a native of French Guiana, had received a French education, had chosen to make a career in colonial administration, and, by 1940, had reached the post of Governor of Chad. On August 26 of that year, he transferred his loyalty to the Free France of Charles de Gaulle and brought his colony along with him. Two days later, Brazzaville followed suit, and so did Ubanghi-Shari. When reluctant Gabon joined the other three territories, all Afrique Equatoriale Francaise was ready to play its role in the struggle against fascism in Africa and in Europe.

The newly completed part of the "Federal Artery" made a significant contribution to the war effort: men and materiel were shipped up through that route and reached Ethiopia and North Africa. All this brought unprecedented economic activity to the Congo. However, the Congo's rudimentary economic equipment did not enable it to take full advantage of the opportunity, nor was this activity wholly beneficial to the country. Indeed, the most "uneconomical and anti-social" form of exploitation, the gathering of wild rubber, was resumed on a large scale.[16]

More significant for the subsequent development of the Congo was the appointment of Félix Eboué as Governor Général of A.E.F. An intelligent, experienced and dedicated man, Eboué devised a new native policy, implemented some of its elements, and saw other elements incorporated into the recommendations of the Brazzaville Conference (February, 1944). After his death in May, 1944, some of Eboué's ideas even influenced the drafters of France's post-war Constitution.

Eboué observed a worsening of the native material conditions while traditional social structures were disintegrating. For this, he blamed on the one hand, France's limited action, and on the other hand, the effects of the same colonial action on native societies. Assimilation- [illegible] the native of his dignity, of the driving force which could stimulate him to improve his condition. In formulating his new policy, he clearly stated his goal:

> We shall strive to develop [in the native} the sense of his own dignity and of his responsibility and moral progress and to make him materially richer; but we shall accomplish this within the framework of his native institutions.[17]

Eboué set out to restore the power of the native "chefferies" by identifying the true chiefs, giving them legal powers, and turning

---

[16] Ziéglé, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[17] Félix Eboué, *La Nouvelle Politique Indigène pour l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise* (Paris: Office Francais d'Editions, 1945), p. 12.

European administrators into teachers of local chiefs. For the Africans who had already detached from the native social cadres and had somehow accomplished part of the transition toward a European way of life, particularly in the urban centers, he created the status of "notables évolués" in the hope that these would soon constitute a native bourgeoisie organized around new democratic institutions.

At that time, Eboué's ideas sounded revolutionary. In fact, they were no more than logical implications of the associationist principles stated long before but still not effectively applied. For his was no African nationalist doctrine. Eboué's ultimate aim was to see native institutions evolve in an orderly fashion toward an undefined level on the basis of which French African societies could associate in true equality with France and her other territories. No doubt was left as to the limits of political evolution. The Brazzaville Conference adopted as a basic principle that:

> The aims of France's civilizing mission in the colonies are incompatible with the idea of autonomy, with all possibility of evolution outside the French Empire bloc; the eventual establishment, even in the remote future, of self-governments [sic] in the colonies is to be rejected.[18]

Nevertheless, the end of the Second World War marked a social and political breakthrough for the Africans. The new political institutions of the Fourth French Republic, the National Assembly, the Grand Council of the Republic and the Assembly of the French Union to which Overseas Territories were invited to send elected representatives, as well as the Territorial Assemblies and the Grand Council of the A.E.F. helped awaken the political consciousness of the Africans, and, although unintentionally, directly led to self-government and to independence in less than fifteen years.

Another momentous change also took place in the economic relationship of the Metropole to the colonies. Britain, during the war, and France, soon after the war, had come to realize that fine policy statements regarding the development and welfare of colonial populations would largely remain empty words as long as colonies were required to "pay their own way." Consequently, a ten-year development plan was drawn up and the French Government undertook to finance investments in the public sector through FIDES, the "Fond d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social." From 1947 to 1958, FIDES spent some thirty million dollars in the Congo alone.[19] Funds were invested for the following purposes: 1) construction and equipment of land, river and air transportation; 2) creation or modernization of post office, telecommunication and radio; 3) scientific research; 4) supply of technical assistance to producers; 5) financial aid to producers (loans, price support, etc.); 6) development of tourist trade; 7) extension of public health facilities; and 8) school construction. To the FIDES contributions must also be added an almost equal amount in private investment made within the framework of the ten-year plan.

---

[18] Georges Hardy, Histoire Sociale de la Colonisation Francaise (Paris: Larose, 1935), p. 235.

[19] "L'A.E.F. Economique et Sociale" (Paris: Editions Alain, 1959), p. 91.

Such a sudden influx of development capital brought the appearance of wealth and prosperity to the Federation, and the Congo, because of its advantageous position, received more than its share. By 1952, however, building activity had sharply declined, and the country's economy returned to its "normal" stagnation, where it still remains.

While the Congo was receiving long-needed economic assistance, new political institutions were introducing limited forms of democracy. In addition to somewhat symbolic representation in metropolitan government bodies, an elected assembly was created in each of the four territories. These assemblies in turn elected a Grand Council of the A.E.F. For the first ten years--1946-1956--Africans and Europeans elected separate representatives. Political parties, at first mere branches of metropolitan parties, presented candidates to both colleges, and a high degree of harmony prevailed among African and European representatives in the Congo. One reason for this lack of racial antagonism was the Europeans' indifference toward local politics.[20] The French had realized since the time of de Brazza that the Congo could not become a "colonie de peuplement" (settlement colony), but would remain a "colonie d'encadrement" (colony of cadres). Most of the Europeans in the Congo recognized the temporary character of their presence, and preferred to remain in the background while guiding and influencing their African

Cadre" (framework law) of 1956.

The Territorial Assembly was not a mere advisory body. It held real power, especially in financial matters: it could ". . . amend, reject, or approve the budgets submitted to [it] by [its] territorial governor."[21] It was also obligatorily consulted on a number of matters.

The Loi-Cadre of June, 1956, instituted a single electoral college, universal suffrage, and a larger assembly membership. Thus strengthened and more representative than ever, the Territorial Assembly and its electorate could face de Gaulle's referendum of September 28, 1958. France, having committed herself to the Kouilou Dam project, the Congo

---

20. Thompson and Adloff, op. cit., p. 41.

21. Ibid., p. 38.

voted 99.1 per cent for autonomy within the framework of the future French Community. Two months later, the Assembly proclaimed the "République du Congo" (November 28, 1958) an autonomous member-state of the Community, and on August 15, 1960, independence was proclaimed.

The last fourteen years had served as parliamentary apprenticeship for Congolese leaders. The lessons were well received, since such a short transition period from a low colonial status to the full exercise of sovereignty was marked by remarkably little trouble. The Congo today deserves its place among the members of "reasonable Africa." These accomplishments are the more remarkable for the fact that the Congo is economically poor, and that few, if any, of the top Congolese political and administrative cadres were educated and trained deliberately for the posts they currently occupy. This apparent contradiction will receive further attention in the subsequent discussion concerning the development of education in the Congo.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In the Congo, the development of formal education and economic development are closely parallel. As we have seen, France had relinquished her rights in the economic area to large concessionary companies. This abdication was disapproved of by many segments of public opinion in France and in the Congo who felt the company system to be morally wrong, politically dangerous, economically wasteful, and quite unworthy of French tradition. That the system was not the answer to the colony's economic needs soon became evident, but as the system gradually disappeared, no adequate substitute was introduced until after World War II when FIDES brought in relatively large investments.

Likewise in the field of education, France abdicated in favor of the missionaries--a step that contrasted with the course of education in the Metropole. At the time of the introduction of French rule in the Congo, the French State took the first effective steps toward the assumption of full responsibility for the education of the nation. In the 1880's, French public education became free (1881), compulsory and nonreligious (1882), secular (1886), and over the next twenty years, various laws tended to prevent the Church from exercising influence and control over French education. The statesman chiefly responsible for the adoption of public school laws, and also the champion of France's colonial renaissance, was none other than Jules Ferry, the same man who subsidized missionary action in the Congo! Such basic contradictions both explain and foreshadow many subsequent conflicts between the Missions and the Administration.

The Educational Monopoly of the Catholic Missions: 1883-1905

Since the French played absolutely no direct role in Congolese formal education until 1905, the question of French educational policy seems almost irrelevant here. However, culture contact was effectively established in 1883, and the mere presence of Frenchmen in the Congo had educative consequences. Education, defined as a process of change in behavior in individuals and groups in a contact situation, is a necessary consequence of culture contact. When such contact occurs within the context of a "colonial situation,"[1] the dominant group inevitably attempts to change the dominated group in a particular direction. In so doing, the dominant group, the colonial power in this case, develops a policy in order to answer the question of what to do with the natives. Educational policy is obviously one component of native policy, and a study of the latter should reveal the former. But educational policy can be, and indeed is, more than an aspect of the whole if it calls for the introduction of a formal institution such as the school which in turn becomes a complex instrument fashioned for the pursuit of the aims of the global colonial policy.

---

[1] For a definition of "colonial situation," see Georges Balandier, Sociologie Actuelle de l'Afrique Noire (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), p. 33.

The determinants of native policy and of the educational policy with which it is interwoven, are numerous and complex.[2] For the purpose of this study these determinants can be divided into two groups: 1) factors pertaining to the character of the metropolitan society attempting to solve problems at a particular period of its history; and 2) factors pertaining to the colonized societies.

Among the factors in the first group, one must consider the French concept of "mission civilisatrice." Students of French colonial policy often use the term as do the French themselves. The question of whether it is what Balandier calls "pseudo-justifications"[3] for colonial action is immaterial here so long as the colonialists believe in their mission. And the French undoubtedly do. This sense of mission has its source in a deep pride in the values and achievements of French culture--a pride easily transformed into a conviction of superiority. If one adds to this a belief in the ideal of human brotherhood, there is only one logical step to the humanitarian duty which dictates the bringing of the blessings of French civilization to wretched savages. Such a humanitarian duty, termination of the slave trade, brought France to Equatorial Africa. This was the original aim of France's native policy in the Congo, and thanks to men like Savorgnan de Brazza and his companions it was successfully achieved. But few would argue that this aim alone would have sustained France's action in the Congo. National rivalries among the great European powers, scientific curiosity, and the lure of economic gains undoubtedly rank high among the motives in support of colonial action. The economic motive may have been the strongest; certainly it is the one which more immediately affected France's policy toward the African native.

Savorgnan de Brazza, the idealist, soon realized that he could do little in the Congo without the material support of the French business community. In undertaking to interest businessmen in his venture he missed no opportunity to address meetings of French chambers of commerce. His efforts brought him tons of goods at little or no cost which he used as "currency" in his explorations. He used the familiar arguments in his talks to businessmen: the Congo could supply valuable raw materials and civilized natives would constitute a vast outlet for French manufactured goods. But de Brazza always insisted on *how* these developments should be achieved. Since he recognized from the start that the Congo was unsuitable for European settlement, he saw in rational economic development the key to the social and cultural improvement of the native populations:

---

[2] See Jerry Bolibaugh's dissertation, "French Educational Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa: Their Intent, Derivation, and Development" (Stanford University, 1964).

[3] Balandier, _op_. _cit_., p. 33.

> So, our action, for the time being, must above all tend toward the transformation of the natives into laborers, producers and consumers; later, the Europeans will come to assume the role of intermediaries.

And further:

> Even apart from humanitarian considerations, the protection of the natives seems to be, in this case, the surest way to save the goose that lays the golden egg.[4]

The concept of assimilation has been closely associated with the aims of French colonial policy. As pointed out by Roberts,[5] the idea applies not only to native policy in the social and cultural fields, but also to the economic, political, and legal aspects of colonial action. Thus, overseas territories are likened to the metropolitan homeland and treated accordingly. In the fields of trade, for instance, tariff barriers are uniform, and the Metropole can establish a trade monopoly in her colonies; politically, colonies are considered as "distant provinces" forming an integral part of the same country; legally, the same civil and criminal codes apply to both the Metropole and the colonies. But the term "assimilation" has two different meanings. The first, just illustrated, is a *static* one: colonies *are* similar to the Metropole. Applied to the Congo in 1885, assimilation in this sense was not only an "optical illusion" but insanity. And it was *not* adopted as a policy by France. In the economic field, the policy was contrary to the liberalism of the time and to the terms of the Act of Berlin. As far as the other French socio-cultural institutions are concerned, Jules Ferry clearly stated the position: "French laws cannot be transplanted heedlessly; they do not possess the magic power to Frenchify the shores where they are imported; social environments resist, defend themselves. . . ."[6] In fact, France *did* apply the policy of assimilation in the Congo, but this is understandable only if one accepts the term "assimilation" in its second, *dynamic* sense. In this sense, various degrees of assimilation may be the inevitable aim of cultural imperialism of all brands: in establishing its domination over weaker societies, the "imperial" society tends to make these weaker societies conform to its own socio-cultural patterns. The degree to which this assimilative tendency is encouraged depends on factors pertaining to both the coloniser and the colonised. Assimilation, as practiced by the French in the Congo from the 1880's to this day, is based on a double act of faith: "It means that we believe in both the *value* and the *possibility* of assimilation."[7] As far as the French are concerned, the first act of faith requires no demonstration here. Faith in the possibility of assimilation, however, was put to the severest test in the Congo. Most Europeans who visited the Congo before the turn of this century were appalled at what they thought to be the backwardness of the native populations. Nevertheless, policy statements regarding the possibility and need for assimilation are not rare. To quote de Brazza again: ". . . the populations [of the Congo are] rather primitive, it is true, but not without intelligence, pliable if one knows how to handle them firmly and without weakness, but with limitless patience."[8]

---

[4] A speech delivered by de Brazza on January 21, 1886, at the Cirque d'Hiver, Paris. Quoted by G. Froment-Guieyesse, *Brazza* (Paris: Editions de l'Empire Francais, 1948), p. 111.

[5] Stephen Roberts, *History of French Colonial Policy: 1870-1925* (London: P. S. King and Son, Ltd., 1929).

How, then, can one explain France's abdication of her direct responsibility in the economic, social, and cultural development of the Congo? The reason is basically financial: practical steps toward implementation of a policy of assimilation required the expenditure of vast sums of money, and France would not, or could not, make such sacrifices at the time. She was engaged in other colonial ventures in Asia and elsewhere in Africa, in areas where need was as great and attraction often greater than in the Congo. But above all, one must realise that the sense or urgency regarding development so widely felt nowadays did not exist in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The British, for their part, commonly accepted the slogan: "It will take a thousand years to change those people." No one could foresee at that time that colonial action in Africa would produce in a few generations a "backwash" capable of sweeping away European imperialism.

So, if Jules Ferry could declare that: ". . . the matter boils down to the need to cultivate the man in the native, to legitimize French intervention through the improvement of all local living conditions, and to lend to colonization the character of services reciprocally rendered";[9] so, too, de Brazza could warn that: "By trying to force quickly upon them [the Congolese] our regulations, our ways of doing, creating, and thinking, we shall be led inevitably to a struggle which will bring about their destruction."[10]

---

[6] Georges Hardy, *Histoire Sociale de la Colonisation Francaise* (Paris: Larose, 1953), p. 143.

[7] Rene Maunier, *Sociology of Colonies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 167.

[8] Quoted by Froment-Guieysse, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

When the compulsory education law was adopted in France in 1882, the colonial administrator in Libreville was asked if he thought the provisions of the law should be applied in Central Africa. His negative answer apparently satisfied Paris, and a decree organizing education in the Gabon was promulgated on April 9, 1883. In summary, the decree stated that:

Article 1: In the primary schools of Gabon, teaching will be carried out exclusively in the French language.
No less than half the school time will be devoted to the study of the French language.

Article 2: Anyone who wishes to open a school, or a children's home, must request authorization from the Commandant.

Article 3: Primary schools for boys are directed by men.
Primary schools for girls, mixed schools, and children's homes are directed by women.

Article 4: A primary school certificate is hereby set up: this certificate is granted after a public examination for which children can sit as soon as they have reached the age of eleven. The examining jury is appointed by the Commandant.[11]

It must be noted that this decree did not establish any public school. It merely set the legal basis on which the State could transfer part of its responsibility to individuals and groups who wished to engage in the educational enterprise. But the decree did state the one principle of educational policy to which France consistently adhered throughout the period of French colonial control in the Congo: ". . . teaching will be carried out exclusively in the French language." Furthermore, if the decree failed to set up an elaborate mechanism for inspection and control, it gave the State a strong determining voice in deciding what the schools were to teach by giving the State full control over examinations.

---

[9] Hardy, op. cit.

[10] Froment-Guieysse, op. cit.

[11] A copy of the original printing of the document is available at the ex-Ministry of Overseas France, Paris.

The 1883 decree remained in force until 1911 when public education was formally organised in Afrique Equatoriale Francaise. The strict provisions of the decree regarding the use of the French language undoubtedly helped discourage American Protestant missionaries from pursuing their work in Gabon. They were soon largely replaced by the Protestant "Mission Evangélique de Paris."

The case of the Congo was different. The right of France to impose the 1883 decree was seriously challenged by the Act of Berlin, revised by the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1919). Article 11 specifically states:

> They [the signatory powers] will protect and encourage without distinction of nationality or cult the religious, scientific, or philanthropic institutions and undertakings, created and organised by the subjects of the other signatory powers and of the other member-states of the Leagues of Nations which will adopt the present convention, tending to lead the natives [of the Conventional Basin] on the road to progress and civilization. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> Freedom of conscience and freedom to practice any religion are expressly guaranteed to all subjects of the signatory powers. . . . In this spirit, missionaries will have the right to enter, circulate and reside on the African territory, with the opportunity to establish themselves there in order to pursue religious work.

France, therefore, could not enforce discriminatory measures against non-French-speaking missionaries, much less bar missionary work altogether. Hence, the apparently illogical course adopted by this most actively anti-clerical Third Republic: encouraging the establishment of *French* Catholic missions in the Congo as the most economical way to spread the French language and civilization. But this was a makeshift solution reluctantly accepted by individual officials over the objections of others. This explains the precarious character of the moral and financial support, when granted, as well as the countless difficulties put in the French missionaries' way during the period of uneasy association between Church and State in the Congo. Sources quoted below amply support this assertion.

Jules Ferry, for one, did not hesitate to give 10,000 francs to young Father Augouard, in 1884, out of secret funds.[12] As Father Augouard reported later, Jules Ferry granted the subsidy because he knew that it was a sound investment, bringing the natives closer to

---

[12] Jehan de Witte, *Un explorateur et un apôtre du Congo français, Mgr. Augouard--Vicaire Apostolique du Congo français; sa vie--ses notes de voyage et sa correspondance* (Paris: Emile-Paul, 1924), p. 31.

France by teaching them the French language.[13] From 1883 to 1900, a subsidy of 2000 francs (and up to 4000 francs) per school was granted to the Catholic missionaries out of the local French Congo budget. In an official letter (dated January 11) to Bishop Carrie of Pointe-Noire (Loango), de Brazza, then Commissioner General, stated:

> . . . . I am granting you for the year 1888 a subsidy of 2000 francs in favor of your establishment of Saint Joseph of Linzolo. Similar action will be taken for any new foundation of this type where your efforts will be utilized for the purpose of educating native children.[14]

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was granting Father Augouard 7500 francs for the establishment of schools in the region north of Brazzaville. This, of course, was very inadequate to meet the needs. Father Augouard, in a letter dated February 14, 1888, thanking the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the grant, requested 20,000 francs. To this letter was attached a recommendation written by the local administrator in support of the request. After expressing satisfaction for the results obtained by the missionaries, the administrator added:

> . . . the conduct of the missionaries in the area under my jurisdiction has always been one of deference to authority and to the highest degree respectful of our institutions.[15]

Here, the administrator's reference to the state-clergy controversy is obvious and so is his desire to protect himself against anti-clerical attacks. Augouard's request was transmitted to the Ministry of the Navy and Colonies, which passed it on to Monsieur de Brazza, etc. Two years later, the records still showed no action taken.

The Catholic missionaries were also supported financially by the State in various other ways, particularly by the grant of a limited number of free ship passages to and from the Congo.[16] But they were not successful in their many requests for customs duty exemption. One missionary, in a letter to de Brazza (June 18, 1884), remarked that civil servants were not subject to customs duty. "Well," he suggested, "let us be considered as functionaries, free and unpaid functionaries, voluntarily dedicated to the spreading of the language and influence of France."[17] Such requests were turned down.

---

[13] Mgr. Augouard, in a letter dated September 16, 1919, addressed to the Minister of Colonies. A copy of the letter is in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Brazzaville.

[14] This letter is part of a collection of "Documents et Témoignages" made available to the author by Bishop Fauret, Pointe-Noire.

[15] Archives, ex-Ministry of Overseas France, Gabon-Congo File.

[16] *Ibid.*

Finally, the following incident will not only reveal de Brazza's attitude toward the missionaries, but will illustrate one of the deeper objections of the French secularists to the methods of the missionaries. Bishop Augouard had requested government help toward the purchase of a second steam-powered riverboat. De Brazza turned down the request and defended his position in a letter to the Ministry of Colonies (January 19, 1895):

> This new steamboat is specially destined for use in the distant interior for the purpose of purchasing slaves, a system methodically applied by the missionaries. The Administration cannot lend its support to an enterprise apparently so lofty but whose very principle is questionable. The purchase of children whom the missionaries obtain from their owners and take away at once cannot resemble a liberation in the eyes of the natives as well as in those of the children themselves. Their simple minds only see in it a change of masters and not a change in condition. The fact that the humanitarian purpose escapes their understanding and that they see in such transactions a slave trade carried out under the sponsorship of French authority present difficulties which call for reservations. Indeed, it prevents the populations with whom we come into contact from grasping the fertile concept of human liberty which it is our duty to communicate to them as a seed for future moral rehabilitation.[18]

The French Catholic missionaries retained their monopoly in the fields of education until 1905 with one exception: de Brazza's unsuccessful attempt at using the services of Moslem Algerians as teachers in the Sangha River area. Always a diplomat and a pacifist, de Brazza had conceived this plan as a peaceful way to conquer the Islamized populations of the northern regions. He did succeed in bringing four teachers and their families, but two of them soon went back to Algeria, one was drowned when de Brazza's riverboat capsized, and the fourth one's fate is unreported. Besides, de Brazza had lost the government's support for his venture: military expeditions were organized and de Brazza himself was recalled. Bishop Augouard, naturally, fought the scheme vigorously on two grounds: the patriotic and the religious. Politically, de Brazza was mistaken, Augouard claimed, in thinking that Moslem teachers would work in the true interests of France; religiously, Islam was to be fought, not encouraged.

---

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*

Catholic Mission Policy. The position of the Roman Catholic Church regarding education is widely known, having been stated by numerous authors, particularly in two encyclical letters, "Christian Education of Youth" and "Mother and Teacher." It will not be treated here. Although no bishop or teaching order would violate basic Catholic doctrine, Catholic education policy is expected to vary somewhat according to the conditions which prevail wherever basic policy is applied, and to the best judgment of the local Church authority concerned. In the Congo, Catholic educational work was one aspect of the missionary enterprise placed under the immediate control of a single religious order, the "Pères du Saint-Esprit" (Fathers of the Holy Ghost). Catholic mission educational policies will therefore be those of the "Père du Saint-Esprit," in general, and, in particular, those of two men: A. Carrie, Bishop of Loango (Pointe-Noire), and P. Augouard, Bishop of Brazzaville.

Personal correspondence, official and semi-official reports written by Carrie, Augouard, and their subordinates are rich sources of data related to the aims, methods, and results of early Catholic mission education in the Congo. These sources will be exploited below. The most comprehensive source, however, although it contains only "formal" statements, is a small brochure published in 1890 entitled "Coutumier de l'Oeuvre des Enfants" (Handbook of the Children's Society).[19] This brochure may not have been written by Bishop Carrie, but he allowed the publication to have his Imprimatur and ordered that its suggestions be followed closely in all the schools of his diocese.

The "Coutumier" quotes the directives set by the Founder of the Order, Father Lieberman:

> In uncivilized countries, they [the missionaries] will adapt themselves to the rough state of the men to whom they wish to bring the word of salvation. They will teach them the holy truths of Religion through simple catechistic lessons adapted to the quality of their intelligence. They will not be content with the teaching of divine law, but they will also teach them how to live in society, in accordance with human decency. They will carefully avoid upsetting these habits (so long as they are not contrary to Divine Law) for the purpose of making them conform to a European way of life. They will only seek to perfect them in their way of life and their ordinary habits.
>
> They will also teach them what might contribute to bring them material welfare, being very careful in this area not to

---

[19] A rare copy of the brochure is kept in the Archives of the Diocese of Pointe-Noire. It was made available to the writer through the kindness of His Grace, Bishop J. Fauret.

> give them knowledge of things which might harm their souls or destroy the simple ways in which one must strive to maintain them.[20]

Similarities and differences already appear between the aims of French educational policy and those of the Catholic missions: assimilation is a common denominator. Both the French colonialists and the missions sharply restrict this principle to religious and moral areas of behavior. Both the French colonialists and the missions take for granted the backwardness of the native populations and the low level of their intelligence, but opinions differ as to the areas and the degrees of change which "civilization" should bring about. These differences will become more explicit as the missions' specific educational objectives are identified.

In accordance with the preceding directives, the "Coutumier" sets the aims of Catholic mission education in the Congo:

> The aim . . . is to give to all children a Christian education truly adapted to African society and appropriate to the resources of the country.
>
> The present needs of African society in the French Congo are those of any society which rests on solid bases, that is, education and hard work.
>
> Religious instruction will be firmly and fundamentally Christian, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman, for this is the only one which contains the true, unshakable, basic principles of societies.
>
> Education, elementary at first, will gradually embrace all necessary human knowledge, then will extend if possible, to useful notions and to those enjoyed by civilized men. It will be primarily practical, that is, adapted to the needs, the capabilities, and the talents of these peoples.

The brochure claims that the present resources of Congo society, as such, are almost nil, not because of a lack of agricultural or industrial resources, but because of the inactivity of its inhabitants. Hence:

> . . . the absolute necessity to devote a large part of the time to work, and to make it an essential element of education and instruction.

But a theme always recurs: the Mission's educational accomplishments must be African in substance as well as in outward appearance

---

20. Father Lieberman, quoted in "Coutumier de l'Oeuvre des Enfants" (Loango: Imprimerie de la Mission, 1890).

(". . . oeuvre africaine et pour le fond et pour la forme"). Therefore, due consideration had to be given to three factors:

> 1) The level of civilization of the populations:
>
> It is probable that many years, not to say centuries, will be required before they reach the level of education, courtesy and civilization which characterize the European races. One may even fear that they will never reach that level. One must not seek to bring them up at once to the height of our civilization. . . . But, little by little, we must develop their still savage intelligence, fortify their weak and waivering will. . . .
>
> In general, the intellectual potential of these peoples is below that of the civilized peoples, and, naturally, it must be so. Therefore our European intellectual training is generally too high and too difficult for the Blacks.
>
> They need an education which will develop their intellectual powers without straining them . . . too much knowledge to acquire may annihilate the intellectual faculties of the Black, drive him to insanity or to death, or, finally, fill him with intolerable pride.
>
> 2) The local customs:
>
> In order to preserve what may be good or indifferent in them, and to bring them our qualities, but not our defects.
>
> For Africa is not and never will be Europe: its climate and its products will never be the same as ours; the Black race will never be the White race, hence housing, clothing, goods, and training cannot be the same. The qualities and the defects of the Blacks are not the same as those of the Whites. Therefore the Whites and the Blacks must not be led in the same manner, nor given the same education.
>
> 3) The products and the resources of the country:
>
> It is obvious that the Africans must rely on local resources for lodging, clothing and goods. That is why we consider it the Missionaries' sacred duty to disillusion the poor Blacks and to make them understand that happiness for them will be found by remaining humbly in the condition where God has brought them to the world, without trying to get out of it for pride or sensuality. If one may be permitted to improve their condition it should not be changed in such a way that the resources of their country will not satisfy their food, clothing, and housing needs.

This third consideration reveals a conflict between the economic aspects of French colonial aims in the Congo and the aims the missions intended to pursue through education: the Congolese were considered as prospective buyers of French manufactured goods by colonial interests, while the missionaries sought to keep the Congolese away from the same goods. Such a conflict undoubtedly accounts for some of the mutual distrust which characterized the relations between the missionaries and the French businessmen established in the colony. On the other hand, no official French policy statement has been found that condemns the missionaries' aims in this area. Indeed, there is no evidence that official French educational policy was ever deliberately oriented toward the transformation of the Congolese into buyers of French manufactured goods.

Such were the aims of education in the schools of the Vicariate of Loango which covered the whole southwest portion of the Congo, from the Atlantic Ocean to a few miles west of Brazzaville. In 1890, Father Augouard became Bishop of the Upper Congo (from Brazzaville to Bangui), with residence in Brazzaville. He and Bishop Carrie had very different personalities; their policies and practices also differed markedly. Bishop Carrie was primarily a pastor and an educator;[21] Bishop Augouard, as a priest, had to play the same roles, but in him the French patriot,[22] the empire-builder and the administrator tended to take precedence. He fully deserves the title of co-founder of the Congo colony: he made a first trip to Stanley-Pool in 1881; he returned in 1883 to establish the first school in the country (at Linzolo, 27 kilometers southwest of the Pool); and he spent forty-four years of his life in the Congo.

Bishop Augouard did not issue educational directives to his missionaries in the form of Bishop Carrie's "Coutumier." The specific aims of his educational effort are revealed mostly in his correspondence with French Government officials. Although these facts are an indication of his main preoccupations, they tend to present an unbalanced account of his position with regard to Congolese education: the spreading of French influence and language seems to assume at least as much importance as religious conversion. This is explained by the fact that Bishop Augouard was constantly defending the Missions' position--indeed, justifying their very existence or requesting moral and financial support for their schools.

On one of the first of such occasions, in his letter of February 14, 1888, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Augouard declared: "We work

---

21. The writer is deeply indebted to Father Delcourt of the Diocese of Pointe-Noire for details concerning the life of Bishop Carrie. Father Delcourt's biography of Bishop Carrie is to be published soon.

22. His German colleagues accused him of being a Frenchman first and a priest second. Documents in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Brazzaville support this point.

for civilization and for France. . . ." Again, in a letter to the same official, dated July 16, 1890,[23] he repeated:

> I hope the Government of the Republic will help us in these French and humanitarian enterprises, as it has done in the past through the intermediary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, for we are engaged in a struggle against British, German, and Belgian influence which seeks to become dominant in the Congo.

These patriotic arguments were not used merely to obtain subsidies from the French Government. There is no doubt as to the sincerity of his patriotism, but this does not mean that he was a mere tool of the French Government. On the contrary, he was an outspoken critic of the Government's policies at home and in the Congo. For Bishop Augouard's France was that of Saint Louis and Joan of Arc; the government officials' France was that of Voltaire, Diderot, and Robespierre. There is no doubt that in spite of the raging anti-clericalism of the time, Bishop Augouard strongly influenced "the orientation of native policy."[24]

Apart from the patriotic sentiments which to some extent inspired Bishop Augouard's educative action, fundamental agreement existed between him and Bishop Carrie as to the specific role of the mission schools. His general position in this respect is best stated in a report that he addressed shortly before the end of his career to the French Minister of Colonies:

> . . . the education of the native must be re-oriented from the beginning ["reprise par la base"], we must teach him our language, moralize him through labor, give him practical encouragement in his agricultural enterprise, and treat him always with fatherly kindness.
>
> . . . .
>
> I have always sought to free the poor Blacks from the state of degradation in which they lived in the past; but I have carefully avoided bringing them up to the European level, since this would be a misfortune for them and a calamity for Society. The day a Black man will think of himself as a "Gentleman," he will refuse to do anything, and since he will wish to live as the equal of the Whites, he will necessarily become an exploiter and a thief.[25]

---

[23] Letters in the Archives of the ex-Ministry of Overseas France, Paris: Gabon-Congo File.

[24] Hardy, op. cit., p. 152.

[25] Typewritten copy of the original in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Brazzaville.

If Bishop Augouard's general attitude toward the Congolese and their culture did not differ essentially from that of Bishop Carrie, we find in him less concern with the idea that as little change as possible should be introduced in the natives' way of life. In other words, his policy was more frankly assimilative, although he set a sharp limit to the desirable degree of change. However, the schools under his authority were organized in a way closely similar to those of the diocese of Loango. But, exactly how were the Catholic mission schools of this period administered? What subjects were taught? By whom? With how much success? Bishop Carrie's "Coutumier" will provide some of the answers.

Early Catholic Mission Schools in Operation. A) School Organization: Bishop Carrie considered the social hierarchy of the time as ordained by Divine Providence and, consequently, proceeded to devise a school system which would prepare Congolese children to occupy their pre-ordained position in the civilized Christian society which he envisaged for the Congo.

Since agriculture, and, in general, the exploitation of natural resources, is the most important source of material wealth, most of the Congolese youth were destined to become farmers. Education for better agriculture and animal husbandry was therefore to be the primary concern of Catholic mission schools aside from the top priority accorded religious instruction.

Next in importance, the arts and trades were thought to be most useful to society while also providing for the physical and moral health of the workers.

In addition to preparing Africans for the occupational areas indicated above, missionaries were particularly responsible for detecting and cultivating vocations to the religious life, as this concern was most directly related to the success of evangelization. Considered as religious vocations were those of priests (secular and regular), brothers and nuns, catechists and teachers. It should be noted that no provision was made for occupations of intermediate skill, such as clerks, interpreters, managers, etc. These were indeed supplied, but only as by-products of the elite training system.

Corresponding to the preceding occupational hierarchy, appropriate educational institutions were created: at Loango, a Higher Seminary (Theological College), Lower Seminary (Secondary School), a Noviciate for native brothers, a Normal School for catechists and teachers, a primary school, and, finally, a few shops for carpentry, woodworking, printing and binding, sewing and shoe repair shop, etc. Because of the missions' limited resources, training was provided only for those trades which the missions needed in their building and expansion program. Other village centers of some importance were also endowed with a primary school under the direct supervision of a missionary. In addition, the same missionary had supervisory responsibility for a number of "rural schools" established within an area surrounding each mission center and put under the direct care of native catechists or teachers. Agricultural training was provided at all centers in connection with the cultivation of gardens and orchards which also served as sources of food and income for the missions.

The occupational hierarchy was one of the two basic classification principles of the components of the school system. The other was the origin of the pupils. At the top of the scale stood the white children who were admitted by exception, since the organization was primarily set up to serve Africans. White children were to be kept apart if their number became large enough. Next came the mulattoes--mostly illegitimate children--who were required to pay fees, if possible. These were believed to have a more "delicate constitution," and consequently were to be excused from hard work in the fields and assigned to lighter chores in the gardens or orchards in view of their future occupation: managers of trading stations, head servants, etc. Because of their future social positions, the mulattoes were to be separated as much as possible from the Africans and taught the white man's manners since they were destined to a place closer to the white man than to the black Africans. Finally, their education was to be pursued a little further than that of the Africans: they were to learn how to read, write, and perform accurately the four arithmetic operations.

The black Africans were to constitute numerically the most important category. They were divided into three subcategories: 1) The sons of chiefs, who, because of their position, were destined to become "the propagandists and supporters of religion in their country." Since they were to become leaders, it was proper to appoint them heads of sections. Their formal education and work schedule were to be similar to those of the mulattoes: tending flower gardens, attending the fathers' table--all as a way to introduce them to the white man's manners and customs. In no case were they to be treated as common children, particularly not as slaves. 2) The free children, the most numerous among the subcategories, were destined to form the "middle class" of the future African society. They were to be introduced slowly to the school routine so as not to discourage them. Religious vocations were to be cultivated among them with particular care. Once their education was completed, they were to be married and established in "Christian Villages." Slave girls redeemed and educated by the mission were to be their main source of wives. The girls' original purchase price was to be repaid by the husbands to the mission. 3) The slaves redeemed by the missions were to be considered as free individuals over whom the mission had special rights and duties. They were to be as numerous as finances would allow. They were preferably chosen between the ages of eight and twelve. They had to be watched closely to prevent escapes, and a reward in the form of a few pieces of cloth and/or a gallon of palm wine was offered to those who brought them back in case they did escape. They were to remain at the mission until they could be married (from the pool of freed slave girls) and established in "Christian Villages." They were to be taught a trade.

In addition to this formal school system, two extracurricular organizations were created: 1) The Society of Saint Isidore, a work group for those who could not obtain good grades in class. Work in the fields or in the shops enabled them to earn their food and lodging plus a small salary. 2) A savings fund, where gifts, cash rewards, proceeds of individual plantations, etc., could be deposited for future use in settling down after departure from the mission. The fund also had an educative value which was not overlooked.

The rules of organization just outlined were to be strictly followed. The "Coutumier" made it each director's responsibility to see to it that the established order was respected.

B) Financial resources: The mission school finances were to be separated from those of the mission as such. The means of support consisted mainly of the subsidies of the Society of Holy Childhood, gifts from various sources, the small and somewhat irregular Government subsidy, and the proceeds of the schools' work and industry. It was hoped that each school would become self-sufficient. Hence, schools were to be established where good agricultural resources existed; no child was to be admitted before the age of eight; no "parasites" were to be tolerated; everyone was to live off local products; and Divine Providence was to make up for the deficits.

C) Moral training: The relevant principles were borrowed from the Catechism and from the civic code. The following vices were to be fought "all out": avarice, lust, drunkenness, laziness, and thieving. The best way to fight these vices was to enforce the practice of the opposite virtues. A few notes on the moral "qualities" of Africans were added: ". . . the white man's superiority, when he recognizes it, irritates him; his vanity is so great that it is often silly and ridiculous."[26] "One must emphasize the necessity of work."[27] And, ". . . the Black, selfish by nature, must be trained to work for his neighbor, for his family, for society . . . , and particularly for the support of the Church and its Clergy."[28]

D) Intellectual training: The intelligence of the children had to be developed ". . . for some among them will certainly be capable of undertaking secondary school studies, and they will be encouraged in this with all the zeal required by the task of recruiting a native clergy."

---

[26] "Coutumier," op. cit., p. 45.

[27] Ibid., p. 46.

[28] Ibid., p. 48.

In general, all the useful knowledge which the Africans were capable of absorbing was to be included in the school program. But it was believed that they could not, and should not, learn everything that was taught in Europe. Therefore, adaptation was necessary in programs and methods. At first, reading, writing, and arithmetic, then grammar, "Holy History," and geography. At a higher level, or at the Normal School level, would be added French history, letter-writing principles, bookkeeping, arithmetic, drawing, applied geometry, physics, and agriculture. Fluent reading in French, Latin, and Fiote (Loango vernacular) was mandatory at the Normal School level.

At the Lower Seminary level, the program included four years of Latin, selected from the works of Christian authors and from those of pagan authors in carefully expurgated versions. This was followed by rhetorical studies and by one year of philosophy. During the last three years, geometry, physics and chemistry could be added if considered useful.

At the Higher Seminary level, five years of theological studies were prescribed. The program was to be identical to that adopted in French seminaries: "An uneducated priest will be despised by the Europeans and of little use to the natives."

Methods were to be of the "practical" types, that is, oriented toward the practical aspects of knowledge. The methods prescribed were those developed in France by the Christian Brethren, modified to suit the nature of the work and the difference in climate and people. Finally, the "Coutumier" emphasized the need for continuity in methods in spite of changes in staff: ". . . in each Mission, one system, one teaching method." All children were expected to attend the primary section of the school and to leave it for the secondary section or for the Society of Saint Isidore. As a rule they were to remain until the age of 15 or 16.

E) Teaching staff: As noted above, a European missionary was in charge of central mission schools. But this responsibility was only part of his duties. As much as possible his teaching burden was shared by native catechists and teachers previously trained at the missions. The teachers were even classified into three categories according to the subjects they were able to teach: 1) reading and writing; 2) the first subjects plus grammar and arithmetic; 3) the four first subjects, plus history and geography. In the "satellite" rural schools, catechists were able to teach little more than the catechism (by rote) and the rudiments of the French or the vernacular languages.

The missions' school system as described in the "Coutumier" was the ideal one. It most probably never existed in reality. The numerous categories and sections just described required a large number of pupils in order to operate efficiently. School attendance, however, remained low for many years. At the Loango School, for instance, in 1892, there were only 225 pupils (free children and former slaves) in three sections: primary, secondary, and vocational.[29] The same situation obtained in the Brazzaville area.

F) Girls' education: French nuns were brought to the Congo in 1886. They took special responsibility for the education of girls obtained mostly through "purchase." The training the nuns offered them was strictly practical and suited to the role the girls were intended to play: that of wives of mission-educated young men. At Linzolo, near Brazzaville, an African widow was employed as matron of a boarding school for girls as early as 1889. But, to the missionaries, the results of girls' education were sometimes unexpected and, to say the least, very disappointing: the girls frequently went to work as domestic servants in the houses of unmarried Europeans and became their African mistresses. Indeed, to this day, the term "ménagère," which literally means "housewife" or "charwoman," retains an ambiguous meaning since it was also used to designate the "concubine" of a white man. The missionaries naturally fought this practice, but with only relative success. Such situations undoubtedly dampened the missions' enthusiasm for the education of girls.[30]

G) General results: It is obvious that no attempt can be made to measure the impact of Catholic mission education during the period under consideration. Even much more limited objectives cannot be attained simply because records are lacking. Indeed, measuring instruments of known reliability did not even exist at the time. It is therefore understood that the following data have no more than indicative value in estimating the results of early Catholic mission education in the Congo.

The only official school statistics available for this period are contained in a table describing the "State of Primary Education" in the French Congo in 1898.[31] Out of 38 mission stations listed in the document, six stations lie within the present Congo territory: Loango, Bouanza, Linzolo, Brazzaville, Lékéti, and Liranga. In these centers there was a total of 12 schools attended by 705 pupils (555 boys and

---

[29] From an interview with Father Delcourt.

[30] De Witte, op. cit., quoting Bishop Augouard's 1920 report to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, Rome.

[31] "Situation de l'Enseignement Primarie en 1898," statistics available from the Archives of the ex-Ministry of Overseas France, Gabon-Congo file.

150 girls). The staff consisted of 11 European missionaries, four Congolese (men), and six French nuns. Not included in the official statistics were perhaps a score of "rural schools" with 15 to 20 pupils in irregular attendance at each school.[32] These did not qualify as primary schools and did not receive any government subsidies. They were outposts served by catechists who taught religion first, but managed to teach a little French.

The reports and correspondence of Bishops Carrie and Augouard constitute an additional source of statistical information. The difficulty here lies in the fact that the diocesan boundaries did not correspond exactly to the present territorial limits of the Congo. The diocese of Loango (Pointe-Noire) administered stations in what is today Portuguese Cabinda, and stretched east as far as Linzolo, 27 kilometers from Brazzaville. The diocese of the Upper Congo covered an area stretching from Brazzaville to Banghi and beyond, in what is today's Central African Republic. Since reports and letters often gave only total figures and neglected to specify the location of the schools, it is impossible to reconstruct an accurate, year-by-year picture of the quantitative importance of the mission schools. However, careful scrutiny and cross-checking of available documents can give an indication of the order of magnitude involved:[33] in 1888, 2 schools, 60 boys; 1889: 5 boys' schools with a total of 205 boys and one girls' school with 45 girls; 1894: 7 boys' schools with 750 boys and 2 girls' schools with 120 girls; 1899: ten boys' schools and two girls' schools with a total of 1000 students; 1904: 1200 to 1500 students. Again, these figures do not include the "rural schools."

Regarding the nature of these schools little is known. However, in reports to government officials, both Bishop Carrie and Bishop Augouard make frequent claims regarding the role mission schools played in the training of native manpower:

> . . . we have always sought to train our pupils in agricultural and trades skills useful to the country. Thus, we have supplied to the colony printers, book-binders, masons, carpenters, tailors, shoe-repairmen, gardeners, etc.
>
> In addition, our schools have produced a rather large number of young men who have entered careers in education, administration, commerce, industry, etc.[34]

---

[32] From an interview with Father Delcourt.

[33] Figures reported here are based mainly on a report sent by Bishop Carrie to the Administrator of Loango, December 12, 1899. The report is to be found in "Documents et Témoignages," a collection kept in the Archives of the Diocese of Poirte-Noire.

[34] Ibid.

On numerous occasions, Bishop Carrie repeated his complaints that the pupils lacked perseverance, that their parents were unwilling to support the schools, and that civil authorities failed to give the school adequate moral support. He contended that word from the Government would have caused the village chiefs to send children to school and to keep them there long enough for education to have a lasting effect.

Finally, a fair and well-informed judgment of the educational accomplishments of the Catholic mission schools was expressed by Félicien Challaye, a Protestant member of the de Brazza investigative mission of 1905. His special assignment was to appraise education in the Congo:

> The State has done nothing to improve the intellectual and moral life of the natives. The only schools where the Blacks receive any sort of education and instruction in the French language belong to the Catholic and the Protestant missions. This meritorious effort is altogether insufficient for the whole of the country. Missionary action does not present the same dangers in the Congo as in countries of ancient civilization (such as our Indo-China): here the natives have no religions of their own, and they are too intellectually inferior ever to develop any fanaticism; their so-called conversion does not distinguish nor set them apart from the non-converted natives. The State, it seems to me, finds no interests whatsoever in brutally suppressing the mission, not even in slyly undermining their influence. But, while praising the missions for undertaking educational work neglected by the State, one must recognize that their teaching is insufficient in quantity (too few schools, too few pupils) and in quality--except in a few cases.[35]

This indictment of the French Government and reserved accolade to the missions adequately sums up the history of education in the Congo from 1883 to 1905.

The Incubation Period: 1905-1937

It has already been shown that the Metropole was not satisfied with the educational services being provided exclusively by the Roman Catholic missions. In return for permission to teach and for financial support granted to the missions, the least the Administration expected was the right of inspection. During the preceding period the Administration claimed and exercised this right at irregular intervals. But this was, and has remained to this day, a major source of friction between the missions and the Government. Bishop Augouard, for instance, was vigorously opposed to government inspection, although he could hardly oppose it on principle. Instead, he pointed to the fact that while the government paid only a small fraction of the cost of school operation, it collected double and triple the amount of subsidy from the missions in customs duties.[36] He even talked of refusing the subsidy on the grounds that it meant selling his freedom for very little in return.[37]

---

[35] Félicien Challaye, "Le Congo Francais," Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Série 7, Cahier 12 (1906), p. 93.

In fact, missionary opposition to the government inspection of schools is easily understandable in the context of the anti-clerical battle raging in France at that time. The missionaries did not believe in the good faith of the local administrators and feared their presumably biased reports. It was not unreasonable to assume that the administrators who most zealously insisted on inspection were precisely those least favorable to missionary activity.

Sooner or later, France had to be directly involved in Congolese education. In 1900, Pierre Foncin, Inspector General of Public Instruction, wrote a detailed outline of the role he thought France had to play in colonial education.[38] Since this is the earliest document of its kind, it will be summarized here:

1) The adoption of the basic principle that education is the concern of the State ("une affaire d'état"); the appointment of a Director of Education in the Ministry of Colonies and of an Education Officer in each colony.

2) The appointment of top-level personnel by the Minister on the basis of qualifications similar to those required for service in France, supplemented by studies at the Colonial School in Paris; local governors would appoint the middle and lower level personnel.

3) A financial organization putting the responsibility on each colony to foresee an annual budget supplemented by a contribution from

---

[36] The mission imported food and cloth for direct use or as "currency" in buying local products. In either case, they claimed that this entitled them to special customs privileges. The Administration always refused on the grounds that this would have constituted "preferential treatment" (not allowed by the Act of Berlin) and unfair competition for local French merchants who were subjected to customs.

[37] See text of a speech entitled "Le Patriotisme de Mg. Augouard" and kept in the Archives of the Archbishopric of Brazzaville.

[38] Pierre Foncin, "De l'Enseignement aux Colonies, l'Année Coloniale" (Paris: Librairie Charles Tallandier, 1900).

the Metropole, which would serve to "reaffirm the rights of the State and to remind it of its obligation through annual debates in the Chamber of Deputies."

4) The secularization of education, already underway, was to be encouraged since the French settlers themselves were entitled to it. However, especially in the case of native education, missionary help was not to be refused. On this subject Foncin recommended the adoption of Gallieni's[39] policy: a) compulsory teaching of French in all schools; b) equal protection to schools of all denominations; c) establishment of secular "official" schools, to serve as models; d) courteous but diligent and effective supervision of all schools.

5) The adoption of the following educational structures, programs, and methods: a) the native masses were to learn "to speak everyday French, through practice, nothing more." Hence, create everywhere "language schools," for children and adults, run by native "moniteurs"; b) the most intelligent natives could be taught reading, writing, arithmetic, hygiene, etc., and a trade (therefore elementary and vocational education at the same time), in "main schools" run by European (French) teachers assisted by natives; c) a European-type education to a "very small élite" destined to "predetermined posts."

In conclusion Foncin declared:

> I believe that colonial education must be tailored for the colonies, diversified in accordance with the particular character of the colonies and even of the provinces within the larger colonies. I also consider that all colonial education must conform to the same spirit: clear, generous, practical, and national; that it must be regulated by a central organization and by local ones in close coordination with it; finally, that education administrators must enjoy, under the supervision of the Governor and the Minister, a large measure of autonomy commensurate with their responsibility.[40]

Soon after this recommendation, public education was formally organized in French West Africa (1903), and the other French colonies were to follow the West African model which may be considered as the "Charter of Education in the French colonies."[41]

---

[39] Gallieni was a French general, a distinguished colonial administrator, and a Cabinet Minister during World War I.

[40] Foncin, *op. cit.*

[41] Albert Dolmazon, "L'enseignement dans la Communauté," in Encyclopédie pratique de l'éducation en France (Paris: Institut Pédagogique National and Société d'Editions de Dictionnaires et d'Encyclopédies, 1960), p. 486.

When de Brazza returned to the Congo on his last mission (1905), he was reportedly[42] prepared to study the possibility of secularizing education in the Congo. It is difficult to determine whether, at this point, the partisans of secularization only intended to discontinue public financial support, such as it was, of the mission schools; to add a public school system to the mission schools; or to ban the latter entirely and to replace them by "official" secular schools. Regarding a possible ban, Bishop Augouard intended to fight the attempt, armed with the provisions of the Act of Berlin. Regarding the replacement of the mission schools, he quickly pointed out that in his estimation the Colony would have to spend half a million francs a year in his diocese alone in order to provide the educational services which his mission provided at an annual cost to the government of 5950 francs in subsidy.[43]

Nevertheless, in 1904, Governor Gentil appointed a commission to study the establishment and control of public instruction in the Congo. At the commission's first meeting, two reports were presented, one praising the schools at Bangui and at Liranga (not inspected once in the last five years[44]), and the other, severely criticizing the rest of the mission schools. At the second meeting, Father J. Rémy, Bishop Augouard's assistant in charge of the mission schools and member of the Governor's commission, presented an important educational policy statement together with specific recommendations concerning educational development in the Congo.[45]

Father Rémy began by expressing the opinion that the question of control of public education in the Congo was irrelevant at this time since public education did not really exist. He suggested instead that the Government should seek first the means to spread education more widely through effective support of those who were actually engaged in this task, and thus prepare the groups for future systematic action. He suggested that the main preoccupation of education for the moment ought to be a ". . . general rise in the moral level of the natives, which should produce future generations more receptive toward civilizing action." He criticized an educational strategy which would aim at producing a few craftsmen and a few clerks and interpreters for the exclusive benefit of the colonial administration, while the rest of the

---

42. Baron de Witte, op. cit., p. 334.

43. Ibid., p. 333.

44. Father Delcourt (interview).

45. Father J. Rémy, "Considérations Générales sur l'Establissement et la Réglementation de l'Instruction Publique dans le Congo Francaise." Typewritten report in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Brazzaville.

population was ignored by both the government and the few educated natives. In order to avoid this mistake, Father Rémy offered concrete proposals similar to those made just before by Inspector General Foncin:

> Establishment of "schools of civilization" where children will learn not to fear, but to know authority, to respect and to like it. It is in this area that the Government can be most helpful to those who have already taken the initiative by forcing parents to send their children to these schools. After one or two years in contact with us, perhaps the child will not be able to say what is the Fatherland, or the Flag, but he will tell you that he is French; . . . the idea of Fatherland will grow in his heart before it can be expressed in words.

At that time, the Catholic missions were operating some fifteen government-aided schools. In addition, they had scores of "village schools" run by native "moniteurs" and visited periodically by French missionaries. Father Rémy was obviously trying to gain official recognition of this type of school for which the missions received no subsidy on the grounds that they were primarily concerned with religious indoctrination. But he went further and suggested that government administrators in isolated posts follow the missionaries' example and devote part of their time to such "civilization centers." It is reported[46] that Father Rémy then made the observation that "Not a single 'functionnaire' has ever given free education in the Congo."

If Father Rémy's recommendations had little effect on the development of public education in the Congo, his last remark apparently stirred the Governor General to action: he established an evening class in Brazzaville, appointed a French "functionnaire" to take charge of it, and granted him a small salary increase in compensation for his added duties. Such was the beginning of public education in the Congo. This happened in 1905. Three years later, another public school was opened at Loango. In connection with the opening of this school, Father Derouet, who subsequently became Bishop of Loango, reports that the Administration tried to recruit an ex-seminarian to take charge of it, but that the latter refused in order to avoid competition with the mission. Then, the Administration appointed a local prisonee in his place.[47]

Shortly thereafter M. Clémentel, the Minister for Colonies, issued a native policy statement, one of the first in which the policy of "association" was mentioned. Intended for immediate application in

---

[46] Father Delcourt (interview).

[47] Father Derouet, Memorial de Loango, Vol. V (Private Record, 1912), p. 99.

Indo-China and Madagascar, this policy was not thought to be suitable yet for the Congo, since its population was still in its "infancy."[48] But Clémentel stated that it was a mistake to believe that

> . . . since he has no culture of his own, the African Black had to be directly oriented toward French culture. . . . What we must strive to give to these populations is a culture for which they are fitted, one which they might have attained, given favorable conditions (and the required energy). In other words, French rule must first create for them the conditions of security . . . direct their development . . . without ever shocking them . . . as far as the laws of civilization will allow. . . .[49]

Of course, no definition of this proposed "culture" was given, nor could one be given. Nevertheless, the Minister believed that public education would contribute to "its" development. He remarked that he had insisted that the concessionary companies establish, each in their own area, elementary schools which would serve the companies' own interests. No evidence has been found that any company took practical steps in this direction. In any case, whatever action Clémentel hoped that the companies would take, he proposed that public schools be established, at first in the most backward areas, where their development was to follow closely administrative penetration. "Instruction in these schools," he wrote, "[would] be mostly vocational and technical," with an important place reserved for the French language. Addressing the local governors, he said:

> You will have to decide whether it will be possible to train a more educated élite--eminently precious auxiliaries of our influence--through the establishment of a higher school where the sons of the principal chiefs could receive an education appropriate to the functions they will have to exercise. In addition to a more thorough knowledge of French, such an institution could offer them useful knowledge in the fields of industry and commerce and some idea of the geography and political organization of their country.[50]

As for the ways and means of establishing such institutions, the Minister left no doubt that each colony was expected to rely on its own resources. As he saw it:

> First of all, as our authority penetrates deeper in various regions, tax revenues will rise. The general development of

---

[48] M. Clémentel, Bulletin Officiel du Ministère des Colonies (Paris: Ministry of Colonies, 1906).

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

civilization will bring about an increase in economic activity, and an increase in tax revenues.[51]

In the Congo, over thirty years passed before this prediction began to be realized.

Introduction of Protestant Missions: 1909. In view of the open invitation implied in the Act of Berlin, some Protestant missions were bound, sooner or later, to try and pursue evangelical action in the Congo.

In 1881, the first Swedish missionary, a member of the Covenant Church Mission, arrived in the Belgian Congo to cooperate with the Livingstone Inland Mission. Five years later, the first Swedish Evangelical Mission was established south of the Congo River. It took this missionary group more than twenty years to move into French Congo territory.[52] Among the reasons for such a delay, one must certainly include the more or less open resistance of the Administration and of the Catholic missions. The following facts will support this assertion.

In a letter dated May 25, 1907, and marked "Confidential,"[53] the Lieutenant-Governor of the Congo (Dr. D. Cureau) informed Bishop Derouet (Bishop Carrie's successor) of certain facts the nature of which might encourage the coordination of the Catholic missions' action ". . . with the political action of the Colony." He mentioned that British and Swedish missionaries established in the Belgian Congo had requested permission to survey the possibilities of establishing missions in French-administered territory. The Lieutenant-Governor remarked that such religious activity came on the heels of ". . . dangerous commercial and political activity," but that he was bound by the Act of Berlin to grant the requested permission. He added: "Nothing prevents me from favoring missions which operate under the French flag." He appealed to Bishop Derouet's patriotism, and suggested that the latter send missionaries to establish posts at precisely the places in which the Protestants were interested. Finally, he hinted at the possibility that if the Commissioner General agreed, some special assistance funds might be appropriated out of the "political" budget.

---

[51] Ibid.

[52] I am indebted to the Reverend Jaspart Kimpolo, President of the Congolese Evangelical Church, and to the Reverend Manne Lundgren, President of the ex-Swedish Evangelical Mission. Most of the information relative to Protestant missions in the Congo and reported here is based on verbal communications and unpublished material supplied me by these two Protestant leaders.

[53] In "Documents et Témoignages," op. cit.

In his reply (August 10), Bishop Derouet stated that the appeal answered "our most ardent wishes,"[54] but that financial help was "absolutely necessary" in view of the recent religious developments in France.[55] Finally, in a letter dated November 15, 1907, the Lieutenant-Governor expressed his regrets that Commissioner General Gentil could not grant any funds, and promised his moral support, since he saw in the work of the Catholic missions ". . . a moral counterbalance useful to our national interests."[56]

These incidents, of course, not only reveal some aspects of the Church-State relations in the Congo, but they suggest how the personalities involved, whether they represented the Church or the State, could combine their efforts, or work at cross-purposes, regardless of official policy.

At long last, the Protestant missions did succeed in gaining a foothold in the Congo, and their presence presented a problem for both the Administration and the Catholic Church, as later developments will show. For Congolese education, though, the arrival of Swedish missionaries could only be an encouraging development.

Aims of Protestant Education in the Congo. Pastor Manne Lundgren, a veteran of over forty years of Protestant missionary work in the Congo, describes in this way the aims of Protestant education:

1) Education is generally considered by the Evangelical Church as a humanitarian enterprise.

2) Training of missionary personnel is considered as an essential condition for educating the masses.

3) The education of the masses, as a humanitarian undertaking, is considered a good thing in itself and as a necessary step toward a Christian way of life.

4) Protestant education aims at communicating strong personal

---

[54] Ibid.

[55] A reference to the law separating Church and State (1905) and the confiscation of Church property worth an estimated half a billion francs.

[56] "Documents et Témoignages," op. cit.

convictions. As Protestants and as members of a non-authoritarian church founded on Christ's personal life, converted Congolese must seek to develop individual relations with Christ. Since most Congolese are not Protestants "by birth," each individual requires deep convictions, not a superficial varnish. Although education, and conversion, of the greatest possible number of people remains a desirable end, this end should not be pursued at the expense of quality.

Pastor Lundgren emphatically denies that the Swedish Evangelical Mission ever pursued political aims in the Congo and describes the Mission's policy in this respect as one of strict loyalty toward the local government. The records show no evidence of departure from this policy. However, Bishop Augouard, as a Roman Catholic priest and a French patriot, thought he had good reasons to suspect the motives of the Protestant missionaries. He constantly referred to them as "Lutheran Swedes," a phrase whose ambiguity well described the role he thought they played. In his mind, "Lutheran" implied both Protestant and German. In his 1919 report to the Minister for Colonies, he wrote:

> . . . before and during the war, Swedish Lutherans, whose German ties were no secret to anyone, had at their disposal enormous sums of money to use in spreading an influence certainly not favorable to France. There lies a very grave danger to which I call attention for the second time.[57]

The local administration, on the other hand, did not seem to take such charges very seriously. In principle, the anti-clerical position of many local administrators tended to make them more favorable to Protestant than to Catholic religious action. Indeed, as long as the Protestants used and taught the French language, the Administration generally kept good relations with them. Later, the Catholic missionaries even believed that they had cause to complain that the Administration preferred the Protestant school system over the Catholic one.

Early Protestant Education. As mentioned above, the Swedish Evangelical Mission was first established in the Belgian Congo, among tribes (Kongo) related to those across the river, in French territory. This fact has its importance because the missionary and educational organization of the mission was actually "transferred" from across the river. School organization and teaching procedures developed in the Belgian Congo were also adopted in the French territory. Since the Belgian authorities allowed teaching in the vernacular, the Protestant missionaries were first concerned with learning local languages. As early as 1888, a Swedish missionary-linguist, Nils Westlind, prepared a Ki-Kongo grammar which the Mission printed on the spot with a hand press.[58] This made possible the application of a well-known Protestant principle: a Christian must be able to read the Bible. Thus, a Ki-Kongo version of the Bible was available as early as 1905. Teaching in Ki-Kongo language became the basic tool of Protestant evangelical action in the Belgian Congo.

---

[57] In a letter to the Minister of Colonies, Paris, September, 1919. A copy of this letter is in the Archives, Archdiocese of Brazzaville.

Upon moving to the French territory, however, the Protestants were faced with the necessity, not only of learning French themselves, but of revising their basic teaching methodology in accordance with the long-standing French school regulation regarding the use of the French language as the medium of instruction. But this regulation did not apply to strictly religious instruction which the Swedish Evangelical Mission continued to provide in Ki-Kongo dialect. Also, the Protestants realized from the start that the training of native religious instructors was a necessity: "Africa will never receive the Bible if not through Africans."[59] Some vocational training was also provided, particularly in woodworking and in masonry.

Hardly anything is known regarding the number of schools and pupils or the exact level of instruction existing in the early Protestant mission schools. It is obvious that more than religious instruction was offered, although neglect of the French language prevented these institutions from being recognized as "schools" by the local Administration.

In spite of its careful political neutrality, it can be stated that the mere presence of the Swedish Evangelical Mission introduced a "subversive" element in the French Congo: here was a group of Europeans who were not actively engaged in spreading French influence, language, and culture. This was bound to attract those among the Congolese who were not particularly happy with French rule. And the Protestant Church, less centralized and authoritarian, provided the Congolese with an opportunity to escape from the rigid control of both French Administration and Catholic authority. Finally, the Protestants' use of the Ki-Kongo dialect both in its spoken and written forms demonstrated some respect for at least one important element of African culture. It is not surprising that, subsequently, religious and political "nationalist" movements could be traced in part to the tolerant, if not the encouraging, attitude of the Protestant Missions.

Public Education Organized: 1911. Until 1907 not a single (French) lay teacher was employed full-time in a French Congo public school.[60] During that year, the first public school was created in Libreville, Gabon. In Brazzaville, a decree (August 15, 1902) created for the natives an agricultural apprenticeship "school" attached to the Experimental Garden ("Jardin d'essai"), and a second decree (January 20, 1905) created a vocational school for African natives. However, no subsequent report indicates that pupils were actually trained in either of these two "schools." There is no evidence either that the Circular of September 15, 1907, calling for the training of native teachers, was ever put into effect. These efforts, however, demonstrate once more the Administration's desire to provide practical, vocational training for the Congolese.

---

[58] Pastor Manne Lundgren (interview).

[59] Nils Westlind, as quoted by Pastor Lundgren in the course of an interview.

The creation of the "Gouvernement Général de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise," the French Equatorial African federation (January 15, 1910), brought about a reorganization of the general administrative services. This was followed, on April 4, 1911, by a decree organizing public education in A.E.F. Although this decree was not implemented until more than ten years later, it constituted the legal foundation of the Congo school system for the following 26 years.

This decree will be quoted at length here:

> Title I, Article 1: Public education provided in A.E.F. consists of three levels: elementary primary, higher primary,[61] and vocational.
>
> Article 2: Elementary Primary Education. Elementary primary education is given in district schools and urban schools. Elementary primary education includes the study of the French language, reading, writing, elementary arithmetic, and practical lessons bearing mainly on hygiene and agriculture. In the urban schools, teaching is done by the Director and includes the same program.
>
> Article 3: Higher Primary Education. Higher primary education, offered in urban schools, includes: arithmetic; the metric system; short lessons on the contemporary history of France, the French colonies, and particularly the A.E.F. colonies', short lessons on geography and natural sciences applied to agriculture and hygiene; and lessons on the use of common medicines.

---

60. Gouvernement Général de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise, "Historique et Organisation Générale de l'Enseignement en A.E.F." (Paris: Agence Economique de l'A.E.F., 1931), p. 16.

61. The first and second levels are "primarie," as opposed to "secondaire" which, in France, was used only to designate education preparatory for university. This fundamental distinction has persisted until very recently in French education.

Article 4: Vocational Education. This type of instruction is given to children having completed their higher primary education under the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. It is intended to train masons, carpenters, woodworkers, blacksmiths and metal-workers.[62]

Title II contains four articles which assign responsibility for each type and level of schools: urban schools were to be directed by an "instituteur" with the title of Director. (Five of these were foreseen: the two in the Congo were in Brazzaville and in Loango.) District schools were put under the responsibility of the District Officer; they could eventually be turned into urban schools. Vocational schools (only one in the Congo--at Brazzaville) were to be directed by a technician ("agent technique") designated by the Lieutenant-Governor.

Title III allowed the eventual addition of special girls' sections to the urban schools, under the responsibility of female teachers. The girls' program of studies was to be the same as the boys', plus lessons on laundry, ironing, sewing, cooking, and general housework.

Finally, Title IV put the school system under the responsibility and supervision of the Lieutenant-Governor, whose duty it was to put the plan into operation.

On the same date, a second decree fixed the status of the teaching staff in the schools of the A.E.F. It included two interesting features: 1) teachers were to be selected from among accredited metropolitan teachers; 2) candidates had to hold French citizenship.[63]

Thus, the "Charter of Education" in A.E.F. seemed promising, although it failed to provide for adequate professional inspection.[64] It remained little more than an organization "on paper" until 1925. It was ". . . a step toward the diffusion of the French language and of instruction."[65] Its failure in practice was attributed to the natives' limited intellectual potential and to the lack of teachers.[66]

---

[62] Journal Officiel de L'A.E.F., May 15, 1911 (Decree signed in Paris by Merlin, April 4, 1911).

[63] Ibid.

[64] A decree dated March, 1913, did create a school inspectorate ". . . which never functioned" ("Historique et Organisation Générale," op. cit., p. 15).

[65] Ibid., p. 16.

[66] Ibid.

In fact, the lack of funds in the local budgets is no doubt at the root of the problem. The First World War also complicated personnel recruitment (for both the schools and the general administration), but this factor did not operate during the whole 1911-1925 period.

Mission Education Regulated: 1920-1925. In 1917, a decree dated October 19 attempted to regulate private (mission) education in the Congo.[67] The decree concerned only two points: 1) instructional material used in the schools was to be printed either in French or in an African language; 2) no "moniteur" could teach unless he was a French subject and spoke the French language or one of the local languages. One may surmise that this decree, issued during the war, was aimed particularly at the "non-French" missions, that is, the Swedish Evangelical Mission. In any case, it was an indication of what was coming: detailed regulations which would deal the Swedish Mission a particularly hard blow, although they would also inconvenience the Catholic missions.

It seems that Bishop Augouard had a significant role to play in this development. At least, close similarities can be detected between a special report[68] Bishop Augouard wrote to the French Minister of Colonies (at the latter's request) and the regulations which appeared some fifteen months later. This important document deserves treatment here.

In 1919, Bishop Augouard had already given over forty years of his life to the Congo. His opinion carried considerable weight in official circles. On this occasion, he took advantage of the Minister's invitation to express his opinion on a wide range of subjects. For example, he stated what were, in his opinion, the main reasons for the failure of the colonial enterprise in the Congo: 1) lack of funds; 2) lack of "follow-up" in ideas ("pas de suite dans les idées"); 3) too many abuses and bad examples; 4) administrative instability at the highest level--the governors did not have the time, the means, nor sometimes the will to build a solid colonial structure. He reminded the Minister that France could not evade her duties in the fields of health and education, duties which up to that time had been fulfilled almost exclusively by the missions. He recognized that the task was staggering, and, as in the past, he assured the government of the missions' cooperation. But he warned:

> A serious threat faces the Belgian and the French Congo today. The Colony, while paying homage to its valiant Allies, must guard against the encroachment to which it might soon fall victim.

---

[67] Ibid., p. 9.

[68] Bishop Augouard, "Letter to the Minister of Colonies," Paris, September 16, 1919. A copy of this letter is to be found in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Brazzaville.

> Having gotten rid of the German peril, it must not fall under the domination of the British and the Americans who, under the guise of trade and even of religion, are beginning to invade the Congo.

In advance, Bishop Augouard answered the familiar objection that the Act of Berlin prevented France from discriminating against any religious group. "Besides," he asserted, "diplomats always find ways to interpret embarrassing texts to their advantage."

The role of the school in spreading French influence in the Congo was re-emphasized. The fact that the missions played a key role in this area was demonstrated by the financial support the Administration had given them since the time of Jules Ferry. But subsidies had been completely discontinued in 1910--"a tragic mistake." While Bishop Augouard recognized the competence and the devotion of the few lay teachers that the colony was beginning to employ, he thought that the ceaseless efforts of the missionaries, moved by Christian charity, deserved an important place in Congolese education. The two or three years of schooling most pupils received, he thought, was insufficient, and the Administration should try to persuade parents to leave their children in school longer.

On the subject of secondary education, Bishop Augouard held very definite ideas. After commenting on the fact that this type of education had reportedly been introduced in Senegal, he wrote:

> But the Congo is not ripe for such progress, and my forty-two years of experience have only confirmed my opinion. . . . This rule I lay down is not absolute. It will be useful sometimes to detect and to cultivate élite youths who will become useful auxiliaries for the Whites. But, *generally, it is preferable* for the time being to education the Blacks summarily and not to turn them into degree holders, of whom we already have too many in France. Later we shall consider the possibility of giving them an education which they are presently incapable of digesting.

Bishop Augouard attached much greater importance to vocational education. He claimed that if the Colony had consented to make some sacrifices at the beginning it would not have had to bring trained manpower at great expense from Senegal and the British colonies. Instead, the missions had been abandoned to their own meager resources, and even hampered on many occasions by administrative obstruction. Agriculture, he thought, was the Colony's greatest wealth. Developing it also provided the opportunity to communicate to the Congolese "love of work."

> Unfortunately, work, particularly work on the land, is considered dishonorable and reserved for women and slaves. A total social condition must be changed, and it is up to the missionaries to do it through example and persuasion.

Then followed an impressive list of crops the missions had introduced since their arrival.

In conclusion, Bishop Augouard, in agreement with de Brazza, saw no future for a large number of European settlers in the Congo. Instead, the Congolese should be encouraged to produce, at their own risks, and to sell their products to European traders at market prices. For these reasons:

> . . . we must rebuild the native's education from its foundations, teach him our language, moralize him through work, encourage him effectively in his agricultural enterprise, and, always, treat him with paternal kindness.

This report ended with a pledge of complete cooperation on the part of the Catholic missions and a hope that the above recommendations would be accepted and implemented.

Indeed, the decree signed by Governor General Augagneur on December 28, 1920[69] seems to have followed Bishop Augouard's advice in many respects, as the following excerpts will show:

> Article 1: No school for natives can be established anywhere within the A.E.F. territory without authorization from the Governor General. . . .
>
> Article 2: The authorization request for the opening of a school may be submitted either by an individual, or in the name of an association duly constituted in the Metropole in accordance with the laws of July 1, 1901 and of December 4, 1902.[70]
>
> Article 6: Any application to open a school by foreigners must be made in person by the applicant, signed in the presence of a representative of the Lieutenant-Governor, by the Director, and by the teachers of the school.
>
> Article 7: In private primary schools, French teachers will hold at least the "Breve Elémentaire" or a certificate of secondary education whose value will be appraised by the Governor General; foreign teachers will demonstrate knowledge of the French language and hold university degrees whose equivalence to French degrees

---

[69] Journal Officiel de l'A.E.F., January 1, 1921, p. 37.

[70] Reference is made to the French laws establishing the conditions under which an association could be formed. Article 14 of the 1901 law denied the right to teach to any member of an unauthorized association. These laws were aimed particularly at religious congregations. Charles Aimond, Histoire Contemporaine (Paris: J. de Gigord, 1947), p. 297.

> will be judged by the Governor General.
>
> Article 9: In all schools opened in the name of an individual or of an association, any change in teaching staff will be communicated forthwith to the administrative authorities. No new teacher or "moniteur" will be posted in a school unless previously authorized, even if his assignment was approved before for another school.
>
> Article 10: No school will be authorized unless instruction is given in the French language. Teaching of any other language is prohibited. Failure to comply with this regulation will entail immediate closing of the school.
>
> Article 11: Textbooks used for instruction in any subject must receive prior authorization from the Administration.
>
> Article 12: Pupils older than fourteen cannot be regarded as regular pupils of the schools.
>
> Article 13: The representatives of the Governor General and of the Lieutenant Governor have free entry in the schools. . . .
>
> Article 17: The Lieutenant Governor designates civil servants of the highest possible rank for inspection of schools.

Although these regulations applied to Catholic as well as to Protestant missions, it is obvious that they had much more severe consequences for the latter. Indeed, by a stroke of the pen, all existing Protestant schools were wiped out. This may have been the effect desired by the French authorities, but the new regulations did not aim to prevent future development of non-French mission schools; they only tried to make sure that any such development would serve the interests of France. Up to that time, both the Catholic and the Protestant missions had been offering religious instruction to the masses in local dialects. But, beyond this type of instruction, the Catholic missionaries who, except in rare cases, were also French, justified their use of the French language. The Swedish missionaries, however, in accordance with the system they applied in the ex-Belgian Congo, relied simply on local languages. The missionaries themselves had only a limited knowledge of French, and their catechists and "moniteurs" in most cases had none at all. Therefore, the 1920 regulations left the Protestants without teaching staff, textbooks, and familiar teaching methods. It was not until 1926 that three Protestant "moniteurs" were officially authorized to teach school.[71]

The new regulations also discriminated against the Protestant missions by insisting on possibly higher academic qualifications than those of the French missionaries. And, of course, the Governor General's own appraisal of degree equivalence provided opportunities for delaying action at the administrative level. But a clearer distinction was made between the two missionary groups by a second decree signed on the same day as the first:

---

[71] Rev. Manne Lundgren, interview, Brazzaville (March, 1962).

> Article 1: Subsidies from the general budget of the A.E.F. and from local budgets may be granted to schools opened in the name of a Frenchman in accordance with the regulations of the 20th of December, 1920.
>
> Article 2: The form and the amount of these subsidies will be determined in each case by a decree of the Governor General in Council. . . .

Ten days later, a sum of 30,000 francs in subsidies was granted to Bishop Augouard.

Whatever subsequent effects these regulations may have had on the quality of instruction in the private schools, one of their immediate consequences must have been to deprive a large number of Congolese children of some education beyond religious instruction. Up to that time, no clear-cut line had been drawn by the missionaries between strictly religious instruction and schooling. Thus, in remote places, along with catechism taught in the vernacular, thousands of Congolese also received some instruction in French language, arithmetic, hygiene, etc. After 1920, this "bonus" could no longer be offered unless the whole course of instruction was also brought up to official standards, a rare development in view of the missions' limited resources.

General Stagnation: 1925-1936. While mission education was being regulated, some efforts were made to put in operation the school system formally organized in 1911. According to the official brochure "Historique et Organisation Générale,"[72] the period up to 1930 was marked by: the continuation of the previous policy regarding the diffusing of the French language; the frankly utilitarian trend in primary instruction, since the schools were expected to produce the trained manpower the Administration and private industry needed; an intensification of European teacher recruitment (21 teachers were appointed between 1926 and 1930); improvement in the organization, official status, and training of native personnel; creation of a regular "moniteur" service in 1926; the effective creation of a School Inspection Service to supervise public and private education (1928); the establishment of several examinations: a school certificate (1927), a school-leaving certificate (1927), and a "moniteur" diploma (1926 and 1929); and the strengthening of vocational and agricultural programs through the use of apprenticeship contracts (1926 and 1928).

---

[72] Op. cit., pp. 17-18.

The educational structures put in operation were, generally, those prescribed by the 1911 regulations. But even the favorably biased "Historique . . ." points out their shortcomings. The village schools were used as a selection device for identification of the more promising students. Thus, children twelve years old and over were not admitted in spite of their theoretical right to education:

> . . . imperative budgetary reasons and the indifference of the great majority of our subjects make it impossible to multiply our schools and even make such an expansion correspond to no real need.[73]

Selectivity was a necessary consequence of limited educational opportunity. A large number of children aged eight to eleven were admitted to the first grade. After only a year, most of these children were returned to their families, and the authorities hoped that the children would retain some knowledge of French, that reintegration in their old environment would still be easy, and that these children would be better disposed toward the French. The others, particularly the sons of chiefs, were allowed to remain at school for two or three years, provided their progress justified it. At this point, the survivors were learning writing, reading, arithmetic, hygiene, and the metric system. They were ready to go on to one of the regional schools. Here, the Circular of May 8, 1925, sounds a warning:

> . . . . It is a serious matter, in a country of farmers, to take a child away from his natural calling, the land, and those who do it must accept responsibility for it.
>
> In admitting children to school, in teaching them principles and ideas which alienate them from their native environment, teachers have assumed the moral obligation to act toward their disciples as good fathers ["bons peres de famille"] and to guarantee them new means of subsistence consistent with their outlook.[74]

Regional schools were first set up in the capital of each colony, then in centers of secondary importance. Pupils admitted to these schools, mostly boarders, were already literate. In three years, the best of them were ready to enter the Higher Primary School at Brazzaville. Those who did not make the grade could easily find employment in the Administration or in the private sector of the economy. They had received further instruction in French grammar and composition, in physical and natural sciences, and in the history and geography of A.E.F., France, and her colonies.

---

[73] Ibid., p. 23.

[74] Ibid., p. 26.

The first higher primary school (in Brazzaville) was not yet established in 1930. The best pupils from all A.E.F. were to be admitted to it after passing an entrance examination. Its three-year course was not supposed to train students for specific vocations: its program was basically a continuation at a higher level of the programs of the village and regional schools.

Finally, the same May 8, 1925, Circular called on the Lieutenant-Governors ". . . to see to it that private education follow the patterns of the public schools." It added that ". . . private school pupils will be admitted in regional and higher public schools as long as they fulfill the conditions required of the public school pupils."[75] This provision, as well as the private school pupils' admission as candidates in official examinations, provided powerful incentives for private education to adjust its curricula and levels of studies to those of public education.

Teachers in A.E.F. schools were encouraged to abandon teaching methods which did not require the active participation of pupils. "Education for living" seemed especially appropriate in view of the frankly utilitarian aims of the French African schools. It was hoped that the necessary teaching materials could also be supplied to every school.

Textbooks were those in use at comparable levels in France (arithmetic, history, geography, sciences, and French language). Teachers were invited to adapt the textbooks to the "intellectual level of native children." Some texts prepared especially for French African schools were also used, and a start was made in preparing textbooks for A.E.F. schools. A "Guide des Moniteurs" was put in the hands of African teachers.

Vocational education received careful attention. It pursued a triple objective: to train manual workers (for wood, metal, bookbinding, basket weaving), agricultural workers, and assistants for the various administrative branches (clerks, bookkeepers, postal clerks, teaching "moniteurs," male nurses, etc.). Manual, agricultural, and administrative sections were added to certain schools in accordance with these aims. In view of the "stage of development of [the] natives," it was believed that vocational education should not be given in technical schools. Regular French employees of the Public Works Department were appointed to teach vocational courses.

---

[75] Ibid.

In accordance with stated policy, pupils trained in the trades section of the Brazzaville regional school were placed in suitable posts. The woodworkers even received a set of tools consisting of a plane, a rasp, a jack-plane, a saw, a hammer, pincers, and a meter stick--a total value of 200 francs.[76]

The economic development of A.E.F. was believed to depend on the adoption of modern methods of cultivation. The agricultural sections of regional schools were set up to train Africans in new agricultural methods. The best students were to become agricultural "moniteurs," while the others were expected to serve as models at the village level. An experimental garden was to be created near each school where food crops, European and local, would be grown. This was the case in Brazzaville. The Boko School, in addition, emphasized husbandry.

The administrative sections of the Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire schools produced 31 clerks, typists, male nurses, "moniteurs," and postal clerks during the 1929-30 school year out of a total of 104 for A.E.F.[77]

Although the financial resources allocated to public education from 1924 to 1930 increased by 380%, they represented a mere 1.4% of the total general and local budgets.[78] Table 1 will give a better idea of the stage of development of public education at this time.

TABLE 1

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE CONGO: 1929-30

Kind of School	Number	Classes	Teachers	"Moniteurs"	Enrollment (All male)
Urban & Vocational	3	13	8	8	567
Village Schools	17	25	1	24	959
Vocational Sections	1	1	0	2	27
Total	23	42	9	34	1553

Source: "Historique et Organisation Générale de l'Enseignement en A.E.F." (Paris: Agence Economique de l'A.E.F., 1931), p. 28.

---

[76] Ibid., p. 55.

[77] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

[78] Ibid., p. 72.

According to the same source, the Catholic mission schools had 1,800 pupils and the Protestant, 400. Therefore a total of about 3750 Congolese were in school in 1930.

The information contained in the preceding pages is mostly drawn from the "Historique . . . ," a brochure sponsored by the A.E.F. government. Although it often points out the serious shortcomings of the Congo school system up to 1930, it is generally favorable to the Administration and very optimistic regarding the immediate future. To what extent was this optimism justified? Another official publication answers this question in unequivocal terms:

> To say the truth, up until the end of 1936, education has developed very slowly in A.E.F.: 67 schools, 130 classes, 7000[79] pupils, for a total school-age population of 500,000 children. Furthermore, these figures must be reduced in considerable proportion in order to give a true picture of education: many village schools were so mediocre that the children attending them were wasting their time completely. One cannot estimate that more than 3000 to 4000 pupils were profiting from their school experience.[80]

According to the same source, during the period 1930-1936, the total A.E.F. school budget increased by 50%; the number of European teachers increased from 30 to 38; and the number of African "moniteurs" increased from 85 to 125. Statistics for the Middle Congo are not given separately, but it can be assumed that the previous one to three ratio was maintained.

Mr. Davesne also suggested the causes of the mediocre condition of the schools:

1) The teachers were receiving no guidance in their daily task. The May 8, 1925, Circular had neglected to spell out specific programs, schedules, methods and staff responsibilities.

2) Left without precise directives, teachers could not always identify the pupils' needs nor adapt their methods. Frequent changes in personnel made impossible the continuity so necessary to a long-term enterprise.

3) School inspection was practically non-existent. The great majority of the schools had never been inspected since their establishment. Teachers were left to their own devices. Many of them often

---

[79] These figures do not include those students attending mission schools.

[80] A. Davesne, "Nos Ecoles," Bulletin de l'Enseignement de l'A.E.F. (Brazzaville: Imprimerie Officielle, 1938), Introduction.

spent most of their time at other occupations--postal, police, administrative work, etc.

4) For a long time, the "moniteurs" were selected haphazardly: some were former house-boys, cooks, or soldiers who happened to know how to read and write. Few of them had ever received any sort of professional training. European teachers, freshly arrived from France, were put in charge of schools without special preparation or guidance.

5) The school buildings were inadequate: many were too small or improperly ventilated. In some villages, the school was recognizable by its state of dilapidation. School furniture was in a deplorable state. Teaching material was lacking.

As a result:

> At present, A.E.F. does not have a single [African] "instituteur" but only "moniteurs," not a single African doctor, no veterinarian, no midwife, no agricultural officer, no qualified craftsmen. Businessmen and industrialists must recruit their employees from Dahomey and the Camerouns and their fitters and their mechanics from the Belgian Congo and from the British colonies.[81]

At least one important educational development occurred, however. The first high school, planned in 1911, was actually created by a decree of Governor General Renard on February 23, 1935. Shortly thereafter the Governor died and the school took his name, "Ecole Edouard-Renard." Since it only started in this period (7 candidates were admitted in 1936 and 40 in 1937[82]) and was reorganized, together with the whole school system, by the January, 1937, decree, the details of its organization will be discussed in the next chapter.

It is difficult to believe that it took almost twenty-five years to put in place the basic educational structures planned in 1911. It is true that the conditions were far from favorable. A look at the history of this period shows that a substantial part of the A.E.F. territory had been given to Germany by France in exchange for a free hand in Morocco. Then, the First World War followed. Finally, from 1920 to 1935, Colonial Minister Sarraut's development plans promised a very substantial increase in educational activities, but during these fifteen years the colony's resources were monopolized for a single project: the building of the Congo-Océan Railroad. The construction itself took twelve years to complete at the cost of 15,000 to 18,000 lives (out of a total of some 120,000 workers) and 231 million gold francs, or many times the original estimates.[83] Completion of the project was due mainly to the single-minded determination of one man, Governor General Antonetti, who gave it top priority at the expense of all other matters. Education was one of the main victims. Financial starvation is obviously at the root of most educational problems during this period; it best explains education's "mise en sommeil" which Governor Eboué so bitterly criticized a few years later.

---

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] Circular No. 77, October 20, 1936, published in the *Journal Officiel de l'A.E.F.* (1937), p. 67.

The Reorganization of Public Education: 1937-1940

From the time of his arrival in 1936, Governor General Reste, freed from the railroad construction burden, recognized that educational development was one of his main tasks. He apparently agreed with the general aims of French educational policy, since he did not make any important changes in this area. The school system, as timidly introduced by previous administrations, also met with his approval. He was concerned, however, with making the system work. For this purpose, he appointed a hand-picked, young, competent French educator, Mr. Davesne, and gave him his full support. For the first time in A.E.F., a professional educator was appointed Director of Education, given full responsibility, and provided with the moral and financial support needed to do his job. Administrative centralization had just been carried further by abolishing territorial budgets. In addition, the governor general assumed direct responsibility for the administration of Middle Congo. From a federal point of view, such centralization may have been premature: the lieutenant-governors of the other three territories became mere "administrative delegates,"[84] but Middle Congo undoubtedly gained from it since Brazzaville became the seat of a growing number of federal institutions. From this time on, then, educational developments at the federal level tend to be confused with those at the strictly Congolese level. This applies particularly in budgetary allocations and in the operation of post-elementary education.

The inadequacy of the teaching personnel, in number and quality, was quickly identified by Reste and Davesne as the main reason for the failure of the A.E.F. school system at the operational level. In a circular addressed to the territorial governors,[85] he announced his plans to supply "educated and competent native teachers" by:

---

[83] Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 142.

[84] Ibid., p. 27.

1) Increasing the teacher output of the Edouard-Renard School to 70 a year.

2) Upgrading teachers in service by means of:

   a) training centers or workshops, operating for three to four weeks during the vacations (Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville were the centers for Middle Congo);

   b) organization of school districts ("secteurs scolaires"), making European teachers responsible for the supervision and guidance of native teachers within large regions;

   c) publication of an educational journal ("Bulletin de l'Enseignement");

   d) adoption of a "rotation" system under which village school teachers would, in turn, be posted in regional schools under the immediate supervision of European teachers;

   e) introduction of textbooks adapted to the country and designed to guide native teachers step by step.

These were only preliminary instructions. They were to be expanded and formalized in the decree of January 2, 1937. This decree did not fundamentally alter the educational structures theoretically transferred to A.E.F. in 1911, but spelled them out in greater detail and became the new legal framework of the A.E.F. school system. In the last twenty-five years, hundreds of decrees have modified, but not replaced this decree in the Congo (Brazzaville). Therefore, its main articles are reported at length in Appendix II.

This reorganized school system, so effectively supported by Governor General Reste with the vigorous assistance of Director Davesne, could have marked the beginning of a new era in Congo education, and in a way, it did. Never again would education be neglected as it was until 1936. But the Second World War prevented the system from getting an immediate and fair trial. From 1940 on, it was difficult to recruit teachers in France, and the Congo Administration, intent on its war effort, had few resources to spare for education.

If Reste and Davesne were determined to develop public education in A.E.F., they seem to have had a low opinion of private education.

---

[85] Circular No. 77, October 20, 1936, reprinted in "Nos Ecoles," op. cit., pp. 46-49.

Several non-official documents support this assertion, as shall be seen below, but officially the few texts published during that period[86] only slightly modified the existing regulations concerning private education:

1) The privileged position of the French Catholic missions was challenged by a renewed official commitment to the agreements of the Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1919) which revised the Act of Berlin (1885): no distinction on the basis of nationality could be made among missionary groups.

2) General education was to be given in French as before. However, the use of native languages was authorized for vocational education or home economics whereas such usage had previously been restricted to religious instruction.

3) A Supervisory Council for private education was created in Brazzaville. Its chairman was the Secretary General (of the colonial administration) or his representative; its members: the Director of Education, one public school director, and one private school director.

At the administrative level, however, the attitude of the new officials was obviously much less favorable to the missions' educative action, the effectiveness of which was regarded as low, and whenever its influence was recognized, attention was brought to the necessity to make it operate in directions consonant with those of official action. A quotation from a "neutral" French source will support this assertion. The author, who declared himself an atheist and a republican, contended on the other hand that ". . . sectarianism is not an export commodity."[87] After pointing out that the Catholic missions were providing education to thousands of Africans at a much lower cost than the embryonic public school system, he sharply reproached the "youthful Inspector of Education" for his "brutal interventions" which nevertheless had met with the approval of the high colonial authorities. He wished these authorities had tried to ". . . temper the juvenile enthusiasm whose explosions were undoubtedly explained by a kind of rash impulse characteristic of the neophytes of any religion." And he concluded:

> Any impartial observer must agree that the Catholic missions in Equatorial Africa have made it a rule to work hand in hand

---

[86] Reference is made to the Decree of January 31, 1938, signed by the President of the French Republic; the Decree no. 787 of March 6, 1938, signed by Governor Reste; and the Circular of January 5, 1939, signed by Solomiac for Reste.

[87] J. Marlère-Pelletan, "La Gaffe," in La France Equatoriale (March 15, 1937). Quoted in "Documents et Témoignages," op. cit.

> with the authorities and to add their efforts to those of the civil servants and of the settlers in order to introduce in this land of ignorance and savagery the elements of civilization which, in time, will allow our subjects to raise themselves to our level. Hence, one can no longer understand the ostracism which threatens one of the best elements for the propagation of the great and generous ideas of civilizing France.[88]

A less objective, perhaps, but more comprehensive document concerning this matter was prepared by the Catholic mission of Pointe-Noire.[89] Written in the form of answers to twelve broad questions, it was to serve as background information for a Parliamentary Commission for the Defense of Missions.

In response to a specific question regarding the relations between the missions and the Administration in the field of education, the document states that up to 1936, relations were good since the missions were left alone. Later, the situation remained unchanged as far as the local administrators were concerned, but Governor Reste and Director Davesne were thought to have declared "open war" on the Catholic missions ". . . for the good of the natives, but in fact, by pure sectarianism." But the same authorities seemed to be very sympathetic toward the Protestant missions.

How to solve these difficulties? The missions wanted to be left alone, or better, hoped that a system called "proportionnelle scolaire" would be adopted. This system, adopted by Belgium, provided for the distribution of public funds to both public and private schools on the basis of the number of students in attendance. Certainly, as long as the whole population of A.E.F. was illiterate, the Administration could not afford to do without the cooperation of all those willing to help. (Barely 4% of the school-age population was said to find places in the existing schools.)

In 1939, in the diocese of Pointe-Noire alone, over 10,000 children of school age were reported to be in Catholic "bush schools." None of these establishments qualified as "schools" under the official regulations, and the missions did not have the funds required to bring them up to standards. These schools were important, however, not only because of their influence on children, but because ten years later they made possible the spectacular development of mission education when funds became available. But, during this period, the catechists in charge of "bush school" operation were incapable of teaching even elementary subjects. Indeed, the demand for teachers and clerks better educated than the catechists was so great that an improvement of the latter's education was self-defeating: none remained catechists if they were qualified for financially more rewarding occupations. (Catechists were paid 25 to 30 francs per month; mission "moniteurs," 150 to 200 francs per month; public school "moniteurs," 300 to 900 francs per month.)

---

[88] Ibid.

[89] "Documentation Scolaire," January, 1939.

The schools were a heavy financial burden for the missions to bear. The children, or their parents, contributed almost nothing in cash form. As usual, a substantial part of the pupils' food was produced by them on mission land, and the sale of farm produce brought in a little cash. This 1939 report estimated that each pupil cost the mission 289.65 francs per year. The state subsidy amounted to 7.50 francs per pupil on the average. On the other hand, a public school pupil cost the state 615.50 francs per year!

The Catholic seminaries were an important element of the mission school system. In fact, these were the only secondary schools accessible to Congolese until the post-war period. Bishop Derouet founded a seminary at Mayoumba (near Pointe-Noire) in 1897. Bishop Augouard founded his seminary at M'Bamou (near Brazzaville) in 1913. (A theological college serving all A.E.F. Catholic missions was established at Libreville, Gabon.) From 1879 (when the seminary was first established at Landana, Cabinda) until 1938, a total of 168 students entered the Mayoumba Seminary, 28 reached the theological college, and 15 became priests. Of course, the influence of the seminary cannot be measured in terms of these 15 graduates alone. Those who abandoned their studies somewhere along the way were nonetheless among the mostly highly educated Congolese. They all found good positions in the Administration or elsewhere.

By 1938, a total of 32 brothers had also been trained by the Pointe-Noire mission. Twenty-two of them left the order, some because they had been trained as "moniteurs" and "believed that they were too clever to remain Brothers." Efforts to train nuns had always failed. New attempts were being made as the 1939 report was written, and four young girls were starting on a training course.

The report tried to evaluate the results of the Catholic missions' educative action:

> In principle, many village chiefs and others ask for a school (not always spontaneously!) thinking that it is sufficient to enter such an establishment in order to become educated overnight. The native envies the white man's science but is incapable --in general--of making the necessary efforts to acquire it. It is not rare to see a school open with 150 or 200 pupils and find only 50 in irregular attendance two weeks later. Against this, nobody reacts--no parents, no chiefs.
>
> . . . .
>
> In summary, the situation has hardly changed in the last 50 years. . . .

The school's influence on individuals was thought to be more profound if the pupils were boarders, because: ". . . [day pupils] after school hours, fell back into a morally depressing atmosphere and in inevitably close contact with undesirable elements." This situation explains the missionaries' tendency to stress the importance of boarding schools built some distance from village and urban centers.

From the point of view of French influence:

> It is possible, even probable, that our pupils love France, because at school we present France in her true light, by word and example. But to say that this love is so profound that they are willing to give up their lives for France, that is another story!
>
> For our natives, in general, France is the country which sends them "Whites." Among these Whites, some make them work or pay taxes, restrict their freedom, have force at their disposal, can throw them into jail, etc., in a word, "command" them; others teach them "White men's ways" or things about God. It so happens that these Whites are French; if they were British, German, or Portuguese it would, in practice, be all the same to the natives.

The teaching staff was of two types and evaluated accordingly: 1) the Europeans, who did their best, but received no special training for teaching at the primary level. Further, they could not devote all their time to teaching. 2) the natives, who left much to be desired, ". . . strictly for lack of money." Better qualified teachers, if available, would not accept work for the salaries the mission could afford to pay.

Up to 1939, the mission schools of the diocese of Pointe-Noire had not submitted a single candidate to the primary school certificate examination (sixth grade). Just the same, mission school alumni were employed by the Administration, the Railroad, the banks, the commercial firms, the Post Office, the Health Service, and the Public Works Service.

The same 1939 report also contained an evaluative description of the Protestant and public schools in the Pointe-Noire area. It stated that the Swedish Protestant Mission had seven schools in the area.[90] These schools, being run by Swedes, were not supported financially by the local government; however, their clinics received free medical supplies if they were run by nurses recognized by the State. For want of statistics regarding the practical results of the Protestant schools, the report claimed that they ". . . train[ed] Protestants, above all fanatical catechists, more dedicated than ours, and better paid, too!"

---

[90] According to the Journal Officiel de l'A.E.F. for December 1, 1937, there were 40 Protestant mission schools in A.E.F. with 2356 pupils in attendance.

Regarding public education, the report quoted the Governor General's speech to the Government Council (December, 1938) which gave the following school statistics:

Elementary education: four schools for Europeans with 163 pupils[91] and 78 schools for natives with 152 classes and 9068 pupils;

Higher primary education: one school in Brazzaville;

Vocational education: one school in Brazzaville'

Secondary education: the two lower grades, for Europeans, in Brazzaville;

Personnel: one Director of Education and 57 European teachers, males and females; 126 native "moniteurs," seven "assistant-moniteurs," and 14 "master-workmen";

Budget: in 1937, 2,909,480 francs; in 1938, 4,725,875 francs; in 1939, 5,582,147 francs.

The report claimed that the quality of the public schools' products was about the same as that of the mission schools. A single candidate from the Pointe-Noire public school had passed the elementary certificate examination at the end of the previous year.

After detailed descriptions of the public schools of the Pointe-Noire area, the report concluded: ". . . only one school, the one at Sibiti, recently built, measures up to the government plan."

Rapid Growth in the Post-War Era: 1946-1958

It has already been shown that Governor General Félix Eboué intended to make education the keystone of his native policy. To formal education was assigned a definite task: to train the native cadres which A.E.F. so badly needed. The instrument, Eboué wrote, "is in our hands: all the French schools of the Colony."[92] Eboué's educational policy was based on four principles: 1) "appropriate" education (agriculture and trades) to the greater number; 2) careful selection of students for further education; 3) close cooperation of commerce and industry for vocational education; 4) continuation of the Edouard-Renard School, then the creation of a higher primary school in each of the territories with, in principle, a special class for chiefs' sons.

---

[91] Special schools were set up for European (French) children. This was made necessary by the adaptation of programs in schools meant for Congolese children. Also a "metropolitan" and a "native" elementary school certificate was given upon completion of each course of study. Holders of a "metropolitan" certificate could pursue their studies in France.

Eboué's educational policy, then, was one of continuation and intensification of the government's line of action, except in one important respect: the anti-mission attitude of Governor General Reste and his Director of Education was implicitly rejected by the government's new willingness to accept help from the missions in the tremendous task of implementing educational development plans which for too long had existed chiefly on paper. This new attitude had great consequences at a time when larger funds were about to become available. Moral and financial support from the government allowed the missions--Protestant as well as Catholic--to maintain their position as dispensers of roughly half the education available to the Congolese.

In the area of school administration, the process of institutional transfer begun by Reste was pursued by Eboué. Before 1937, the Bureau of Political Affairs assisted the Governor in administering and supervising public and private education. Reste brought in professional school administrators and created an Education Department (Service de l'Enseignement). This administrative structure may have been sufficient as a beginning since the low level of development of education in quantity and diversity and the high degree of centralization in general administration which characterized the period beginning in 1936 "justified" the appointment of a single Director of Education for all four A.E.F. territories.[93] Since education in A.E.F. was strictly "primary," the appointed Director belonged to the French primary school cadre. In France, before the Second World War, the various levels of education ("ordres d'enseignement") had reached a point where each operated as a virtually self-contained unit, each having its own aims, methods, establishments, personnel, etc. Primary school teachers and administrators, for instance, received their general and professional education in establishments which had little or nothing to do with "secondary" or "higher education." Hence, for a primary school educator ("un primaire") to be responsible for a secondary school was an anomalous situation. This was about to happen in A.E.F. since Reste's Director of Education was directly responsible for the newly created secondary school of Brazzaville. Eboué lost no time in correcting this anomaly. On July 28, 1941, the top levels of A.E.F. school administration were reorganized:[94] the Governor General retained full control over educational policy, methods, programs, etc., but he was now assisted by an Inspector General and a High Education Council (Haut Conseil de l'Enseignement) at the federal level, and each of the four Lieutenant-Governors (Chefs de Territoires) was assisted by a Director of Education (Chef du Service de l'Enseignement) and by an Education Council. This organization was, essentially, a replica of the school administration system which had existed in France since Napoleon's creation of the French "University." Its transfer to A.E.F. promised, and in more or less subtle ways facilitated, the transfer of many other French institutions in the years immediately following the war. Up to that time, A.E.F. had been administered by French officials whose powers resembled those of metropolitan "préfets." Higher and middle cadres were French; some Africans occupied a few minor administrative positions. Eboué and his successor, Bayardelle, believed the time had come to give Africans more responsible administrative positions and to introduce representative, democratic institutions.[95] As a first step, reforms were needed in order to decentralize the administration. Eboué's creation of an Inspectorate General and of separate territorial Education Departments was in keeping with this policy. The re-establishment of separate territorial budgets, in 1946, completed the decentralization program.

---

[92] Félix Eboué, La Nouvelle Politique Indigène pour l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise (Paris: Office Francais d'Editions, 1945), p. 42.

[93] In the French school system, a "Direction" is an administrative division responsible for one of the main levels of education such as primary, secondary, etc., while a "Servi," headed by a "Chef," is a minor division such as School Health, Scholarships, etc. An Inspector General holds the top administrative post in the French school system.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 saw the triumph of Félix Eboué's new policy. Its recommendations in the political, administrative and social areas proclaimed the principle of African access to positions of greater responsibility in local government. In the field of education this meant, as recommended: 1) a new dedication to the ideal of universal education in order to widen the base of the education pyramid and to allow better selection of an élite with the education of boys and girls assuming equal importance; 2) exclusive use of the French language in the schools.[96] In practice, it meant, above all, the necessity to train higher level manpower through educational institutions not previously accessible to Africans. A secondary level course had been created shortly before the war.[97] Although, in principle, Africans had access to this type of education, it was understood that very few would be admitted since they were thought to have neither the preparation nor the "need" for it. Wartime conditions forced a relatively rapid development of this course. By 1945, 23 professors taught 150 secondary school students. These, naturally, were French students. Such a course as existed in Brazzaville and in Pointe-Noire during the war, therefore, could not be considered as a part of the Congolese school system but rather as a convenient service to Frenchmen isolated from the Metropole. But the mere presence in the Congo of this prestige institution was to exert a powerful influence on the future orientation of Congo education. Its organization and programs were identical to those of corresponding French establishments: it prepared to the "baccalauréat" and opened the doors to higher education.

---

[94] Journal Officiel de l'A.E.F., 1941, p. 510.

[95] Thompson and Adloff, op. cit., p. 28.

[96] Hardy, op. cit., p. 236.

At first, this replica of the French "lycée" was not meant for Africans. Instead, a local equivalent was developed. Just as a Native Primary School Certificate (C.E.P.I.) had been instituted before as a parallel to the metropolitan Primary School Certificate, a "Brevet de capacité" was instituted by the decree No. 45-1846 of August 23, 1945.[98] In accordance with Article 1 of the decree, the "Brevet" corresponded to ". . . the various series of metropolitan baccalaureates of secondary education." But correspondence was not assured, even though the chairman of the examining board was a member of metropolitan higher education. These educational opportunities were available to only a few Africans from 1945 on. Accessibility on a larger scale to "true" secondary education for Africans could not become a fact until the completion of the new "lycée" of Brazzaville.

In the meantime, Eboué and his successors undertook to develop the post-elementary school system introduced before the war:

1) Decree No. 203 of January 20, 1944, established "collèges modernes" in each of the A.E.F. territories. They were replicas of "Ecole Supérieure de Brazzaville" created a decade earlier, and they were assigned the same aims, plus one: to prepare candidates to the "Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs Indigènes Edouard-Renard." They offered a four-year post-elementary course. The first three years were devoted to general education (without classical languages as in the lycées and colleges); the fourth year students were distributed among six sections: teacher-training,[99] administrative and commercial, mining, public works,

---

[97] Article 33 of Decree No. 6 of January 2, 1937 (see Appendix II).

[98] Journal Officiel (French Republic), 1945, p. 931.

[99] The sons of chiefs were placed in this section, but courses in pedagogy and practice teaching were replaced by administration courses.

medical, and veterinarian. The program of this fourth year included general and specialized courses and internships. Successful completion of the course brought about the automatic assignment of the graduates to predetermined positions in the territory's administrative cadres. Unsuccessful candidates could be assigned to subordinate positions.

2) The creation of the territorial "collèges modernes" made possible, and necessary, the upgrading of the Edouard-Renard School of Brazzaville. This was accomplished by the decree of February 20, 1946, creating the "Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs de Brazzaville."

The School was designed to give to the best graduates of the territorial "collèges modernes," having completed a first course of studies, a general education on a level comparable to that of the second cycle of studies, complemented by specialized professional studies qualifying the candidates for higher cadres of A.E.F.

The School, under the responsibility of the Inspector General of Education, offered a three-year course in three separate sections: science (mining, public works, architecture, general medicine, veterinary science, and pharmacy), teacher-training, and administration (general administration, finance, posts, telegraphy and telephone, and radio broadcasting).

The candidates were selected among the graduating students of the territorial "collèges modernes." The list of admitted candidates was proposed each year by the Inspector General and approved by the Governor General, on the basis of the students' examination results and of the projected personnel requirements of each territory. As in the case of the earlier reorganization of the Edouard-Renard School, an Advisory Council was set up which helped the "Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs" fill higher level manpower needs.

As plans were being made for a rapid expansion of the school systems in the four territories, the shortage of African teachers was acutely felt. The teacher-training facilities of the Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs were soon recognized to be insufficient. To solve the problem this section was removed from Brazzaville and set up as a special school at Mouyoundzi, in the Pool region, some 100 miles from Brazzaville. This location was not too far from the Congo-Océan Railroad and offered the advantage of being in a rural area, an environment more closely resembling that in which the future teachers were likely to work after graduation.

The Mouyoundzi Normal School was created by decree No. 2099 of August 7, 1947,[100] as a federal institution. Its student body, like that of the École des Cadres Supérieurs of which it was a part, was recruited among the graduating classes of the territorial "collèges modernes," and eventually, among the fourth year students of the lycées and colleges of all A.E.F. The course of studies was distributed over a period of three years. It included general education courses, the theory and practice of teaching, and a short internship period. The local public school was attached to the Normal School to serve as demonstration school.

---

[100] 100. *Journal Officiel de l'A.E.F.*, 1947, p. 1107.

The students selected to attend the Mouyoundzi Normal School received a full scholarship which included transportation, full board, clothing, and a monthly stipend of fifty francs, all charged to the federal budget. In return, the scholars had to sign a pledge that they would follow the full three-year course of studies and that they would serve as teachers for a period of ten years after their graduation. Failure to honor this pledge carried the obligation to reimburse the colony for the amount of the scholarship under conditions set in each case by the Governor General. In principle, the graduates were assigned posts in the territory of their origin.

Technical education naturally received the attention of Eboué and his successors. The January, 1937, decree had already established the basic structures. An official circular (July 11, 1945), signed by the Inspector General of Education, spelled out in greater details the aims, the modes of operation, and the curriculum of sections and schools designed to offer technical education:

1) Apprenticeship sections. These were attached to regional or urban schools and put under the immediate responsibility of the chief of the "secteur scolaire." Each "secteur" had to have at least one such section. Instruction was given by African master-tradesmen graduated from the Brazzaville Vocational School. In these sections, the pupils of the two upper grades of native elementary schools received an introduction to manual trades. It was understood that once the course was completed, some pupils would accomplish one year of apprenticeship in order to perfect their knowledge and develop their aptitudes in a chosen trade. It was hoped that the new trainees would remain in their respective village.

2) Trade Schools. Set up in the main centers of the colony, these schools were prepared to admit in the third year the best products of the apprenticeship sections, but their four-year course was designed to train skilled workers and technicians who had received an elementary education. The primary school leaving certificate was not required for admission. Those who successfully completed the course received the school's diploma.

3) Vocational Schools. Standing at the top of technical education's hierarchy, these schools could only admit primary school certificate holders (except in the case of the best graduates of the trade

schools who were admitted in the third year). Their four-year course was designed to train the future foremen, master-tradesmen, and the "moniteurs" of the two lower levels of technical education. More attention was therefore paid to general education and to the theoretical aspects of the various trades. In 1945, Brazzaville alone had such a school catering to the needs of the whole federation.

The same Circular offered a rationale for this type of technical school organization: The "intellectual weakness" of some elementary school pupils prevented them from profiting from academic studies; hence, the development of parallel apprenticeship sections directly oriented toward the practice of a trade.

The system was designed to operate in this way: 1) Among the elementary school leaving certificate candidates (C.E.P.), an élite was identified and separated into two branches--a "general" one seeking admission (after C.E.P.) to the territorial "collèges modernes" or the Agricultural School of Sibiti (Congo), and a vocational one seeking admission (also after C.E.P.) to the Vocational School of Brazzaville or to one of the trade schools in case of failure at the Brazzaville competitive examination. 2) The apprenticeship sections would take in those who, during their elementary schooling, had reached the limits of their intellectual potential. These pupils were destined to remain in the villages and render services in the improvement of village life.

By the time World War II ended, the main elements of the French primary and secondary educational systems had been transferred to the Congo and modified in some ways to conform to local conditions. The top of the edifice, higher education, was still missing. On May 30, 1945, however, General de Gaulle signed a decree[101] authorizing colonial governors to grant scholarships enabling students to pursue their studies in the Metropole or in North Africa. In principle, no distinction was made between native African applicants and French students whose parents were posted in the colonies.

It should be noted that except for the embryonic secondary courses to which few Africans were admitted, the post-elementary education then offered in the Congo had a definitely "terminal" character, that is, it was geared to the immediate production of skilled and semi-skilled manpower. The length of training, four or seven years (in the case of the "Ecole des Cadres Supérieurs") corresponded to the time required to obtain the B.E.P.C. ("Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle") or attain the baccalaureate, respectively. But since the programs included a mixture of general and specialized courses, the general level of education reached by the students did not allow them to move up easily to a higher level of education nor to more prestigeous occupations or professions.

---

[101] *Journal Officiel* (French Republic), 1945, p. 503.

But even these limited opportunities existed more on paper than in reality. The transfer of French educational institutions had moved from the mere intentional level of policy statements to the formal level of paper organization. To a limited extent[102] school structures had been put into operation. One essential step remained to be taken if the educational development plans of the early 1940's were not to have the same fate as that of the 1911, 1920, and 1937 plans: adequate physical facilities and sufficient personnel had to be provided, and both required expenditures of funds not locally available. Massive investment funds from outside sources were absolutely necessary. This is precisely the reason why, for the first time in history, post-war France devised a large-scale development plan applicable to French overseas territories and provided the money needed to implement them through the "Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social"--commonly known as FIDES.

The Contribution of FIDES (1947-1958). French post-war reconstruction was undertaken along the lines of the Monnet Plan for Modernization and Equipment. Within the framework of the French Union, the Plan was extended to include the development of the Overseas Territories. Originally, a ten-year plan was drawn up and the FIDES fund was created to finance it. A.E.F., like other territories, was invited to submit a ten-year plan for the period 1947-1956, but work really got started in 1950.[103] The Paris planners were dealing with territories at widely different stages of development. In A.E.F., preliminary studies on which to base the plans were lacking. Also, work on approved projects could proceed only at a slow pace, chiefly because A.E.F.'s low degree of development gave it an equally low "absorption capacity." Policy changes in Paris also contributed to the slow start. For instance, by the time A.E.F. was ready to put its ten-year plan into operation, Paris had decided instead on a series of four-year plans. All this makes presently available statistics somewhat incoherent: it is seldom possible to separate the amounts approved and those actually spent in a given year. The shared responsibilities of the Metropolitan, the Federal, and the Territorial governments also adds to the confusion. In principle, FIDES was to pay half the construction costs, while the other half was financed through loans whose interests were to be borne by the Territories. The operating costs (maintenance, personnel, etc.) were to be paid out of local current budgets.

Out of the 51 billion CFA francs[104] approved in 1948 for the

---

[102] See Appendix III for A.E.F. school statistics for the years 1935, 1939, 1943, and 1946.

[103] Thompson and Adloff, op. cit., p. 109.

[104] The CFA (Colonies Francaises d'Afrique) franc was created in

1947-56 period, "61.4% was to be allotted to the infrastructure, 14.3 percent to production, and 24.3 percent to social projects."[105] These allocations de-emphasize production to which, it was hoped, private investment would contribute. Although subsequent plans altered the balance, it is now apparent that initial investments overburdened local budgets with sharply rising maintenance costs without corresponding rises in tax revenues.

"Social projects" included mainly public health and education. Attention to the latter echoed a statement contained in the preamble of the Constitution of the Fourth French Republic: ". . . equal access for children and adults to instruction, vocational training, and culture."[106] Accordingly, the ten-year plan (for Middle Congo) aimed at universal education within this period.[107] Out of the 50 new classrooms to be opened in 1948, 25 were to be in village schools. Middle Congo allocated 32 million CFA francs, or 12.5 percent of the total budget, to education for the year 1948--not including 11 million granted by the Federal Government to private education. But Territorial Chief Fourneau estimated that nearly a billion CFA francs would be required to reach Middle Congo's educational goals.[108] Such a large sum could simply not be found without the help of FIDES.

It will be recalled that FIDES credits were not used for the maintenance and operation of facilities created in implementation of the Plan. Every classroom FIDES helped build therefore caused maintenance and operation costs to rise. Since the same cost items made up most of the education budgets before and during World War II, Table 2, a comparison of educational expenditures expressed as percentages of total budgets, should make this point clear.

Educational expenditures had been rising in the Congo before the post-war period. The ratios listed tend to minimize this fact since

---

1945. Its value was set at two Metropolitan francs in 1948. Its present value is 0.02 NF or approximately four cents (U.S.).

[105] Thompson and Adloff, op. cit., p. 110.

[106] Quoted in Enseignement Outre-Mer, Bulletin de l'Inspection Générale de l'Enseignement et de la Jeuness du Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer (Paris: Société Parisienne d'Imprimerie, 1950), p. 33.

[107] M. Fourneau (Chief, Middle Congo Territory), in a speech delivered at the opening of the Second Annual Session of the Representative Council, August 18, 1948 (Brazzaville: Imprimerie Officielle, 1948), p. 10.

[108] Ibid.

TABLE 2

SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND SUPPLY EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET MIDDLE CONGO AND A.E.F.--1925-1957

Year	Middle Congo	A.E.F. Government General	Year	Middle Congo	A.E.F. Government General
1925[a]	4.6%	---[a]	1941	---	2.0%
1926	4.6	---	1942	---	3.7
1927	3.6	---	1943	---	2.8
1928	2.8	---	1944	---	3.2
1929	3.1	---	1945	---	3.9[e]
1930	2.9	---	1946	---	4.2
1931	3.3	---	1947[c]	6.6	1.2
1932	2.8	---	1948	12.9	1.9
1933	3.0	---	1949	9.3	1.9
1934	2.2	---	1950	10.3	2.1
1935[b]	---	1.6	1951[d]	10.7	1.2[f]
1936	---	1.3	1952	13.0	1.3
1937	---	1.3	1953	14.2	1.2
1938	---	1.4	1954	13.8	1.5
1939	---	1.2	1955	14.8	1.2
1940	---	1.3	1956[g]	18.9	1.9
			1957[h]	26.2	---

a. *Annuaire Statistique de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise*, Vol. I (Brazzaville: Haut Commissiariat de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise, 1950), Table XV, p. 200. No education expenditures appear in the A.E.F. general budget for the years 1925-1935.

b. *Ibid.*, p. 189. No separate territorial budgets existed during the period, 1935-46.

c. *Ibid.*, p. 191. General and territorial budgets were resumed in 1947. Percentages based on budget forecasts for the years 1945-1950.

d. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Table D, I-8. Percentage based on actual expenditures.

e. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 191. Percentages based on budget forecasts for years 1945-50.

f. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Table D, I-6. Percentages based on actual expenditures.

g. *Enseignement Outre-Mer*, No. 8, December, 1956, Table IX, p. 36. Percentages based on figures which include *all* educational expenditures.

h. *Ibid.*, No. 10, December, 1958.

NOTE: Full responsibility for the cost of elementary education was turned over to each territory in 1947. This explains the decrease (4.2 to 1.2) in the general budget.

both general and educational expenditures tend to vary together. On the other hand, quotations of actual amounts spent for educational purposes may be misleading unless corrections are made to offset the changing value of the monetary unit from year to year. But the rise of educational expenditures can be shown in another way. From 1945 to 1946, for instance, the ratios of educational expenditures (for personnel and supplies) to total budget increased from 3.9% to 4.2%. Yet, educational expenditures increased 70%. The small 0.3% increase in ratio is explained by the fact that the total budget increased by 57%.

Tables 3 and 4 summarize FIDES contribution to educational development in A.E.F. and in the Congo.

TABLE 3

CONTRIBUTION OF FIDES TO EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN A.E.F. 1947-1955

Year	CFA Francs
1947-48	7,600,000[a]
1948-49	12,200,000
1949-50	90,000,000
1950-51	196,700,000[b]
1951-52	153,700,000
1952-53	304,900,000
1953-54	100,900,000[c]
1954-55	201,200,000

a. Annuaire Statistique de l'Afrique Equatoriale, op. cit., Vol. I, Table XXVIII, p. 213.

b. Ibid., Vol. II, Table III B, p. D I-20.

c. Ibid., Table III C, p. D I-21.

NOTE: Figures by territory not available before 1953.

TABLE 4

CONTRIBUTION OF FIDES TO EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE CONGO
July 1, 1955-June 30, 1958
(in millions of CFA francs)

	Public Education	Private Education	Percentage by Type of School	Total
Primary Education	185.4	239.31	58.8	424.71
Secondary Education	144.0	74.0	30.2	218.0
Higher Education	None	None	None	None
Technical Education	53.6	25.6	11.0	79.2
Total	383.0	338.91	100	721.91

Source: Enseignement Outre-Mer, op. cit., No. 10, December, 1958, pp. 50-51.

NOTE: The same source (December, 1950) states that for all the territories taken together, FIDES funds were to be allocated to the various types of education thus: primary, 25.0; secondary, 37.5; higher, 4.5; technical, 32.0; and popular, 1.

As more and more school facilities came into existence as a result of FIDES intervention, the territorial and federal budgets became less able to contribute to school construction and equipment. Originally, France had undertaken to support 55% of the cost of development projects, while the territories were responsible for the remaining 45%. Starting in 1952, the territories were expected to pay interests on past loans. But local revenues failed to rise sufficiently, due to the fact that most of the development funds had been invested in projects which were unlikely to produce quick returns: means of communication, public health, and education. In July, 1953, France increased

her share to 75%, and by 1956, she had assumed responsibility for 90% of the Plan's total expenditures, without prospects of reimbursement.[109]

Such a combination of relatively massive French investment and greatly increased local effort produced dramatic educational growth in A.E.F., and particularly in the Congo. Detailed enrollment statistics showing the progressive increase from 1945-46 until 1953-54 would demonstrate this point. Unfortunately, records are incomplete with regard to the development of education in each of the four A.E.F. territories before 1950. Nevertheless, the following figures give helpful indications.

TABLE 5

EVOLUTION OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN A.E.F. AND IN THE CONGO[a] 1946-1954

	1945-46		1950-51		1953-54	
	A.E.F.	Middle Congo	A.E.F.	Middle Congo	A.E.F.	Middle Congo
Boys	31,062	-	78,448	35,900	111,289	49,252
Girls	3,088	-	15,068	7,251	24,011	10,080
Total	34,150	-	93,516	43,151	135,300	59,332
School Attendance Ratio[b]	4%	-	10.8%	34.3%	20.3%	57.0%

a. Includes public and private schools at all levels.

b. Selected base: 15%, that is, potential school enrollment is estimated to be 15% of total population. School attendance ratios are obtained by dividing the enrollment figures by the estimated potential enrollment.

Source: Enseignement Outre-Mer, op. cit., Bulletin, No. 8, December, 1956, pp. 16-17.

---

[109] Thompson and Adloff, op. cit., p. 114.

Before World War II, the Congo was leading the rest of the federation in educational development. Roughly one-third of total A.E.F. school enrollment was found in the Congo. It appears in Table 5 that the Congo built on this early advantage until more than 43 per cent of A.E.F. school children were enrolled in Congolese schools. Many factors contributed to this situation. The Congo benefited greatly from the presence of the Federal Government in the Brazzaville area: Federal educational institutions (secondary and technical) were created and developed in that area before spreading to the other territories. Strictly Congolese efforts deserve much of the credit for seizing and retaining a leading position: funds allocated to education have been consistently greater in the Congo than in any other A.E.F. territory. Liberal allocations of funds would not, in themselves, have produced such results if conditions for their effective use had not existed. The Congo shared with Gabon the advantage of having numerous missionary establishments with European and African personnel eager to put available funds to immediate use. Governor Eboué and his successors, and later the members of the Representative Councils, had the good sense to recognize the potential of the existing mission organizations. Beginning in 1943, public funds subsidized in increasing amounts the educational efforts of the missions. In 1950, FIDES credits were extended to the missions for the purpose of school construction. Although FIDES credits supported only half the costs of private school construction, they constituted "seed money" placed in very fertile soil. Table 6 will show the post-war growth of mission education in A.E.F. and indicate its importance in relation to total growth. Although before 1950, statistics by territory are not available, it can be assumed that at least half of the A.E.F. mission schools were located in the Congo.

There were always more mission school establishments than the number recognized and subsidized by the government. The changing quality of the mission schools and the criteria by which they were evaluated influenced their inclusion in statistical reports. The drop from 110 to 85 in the number of Catholic mission schools from 1938-39 to 1945-46 thus becomes understandable. On the other hand, the dramatic increase (from 192 to 453) in the total number of mission schools during the period 1948-49 to 1951-52 suggests not only an increased educational effort but also a certain relaxation of standards. Indeed, in their determination to extend school facilities quantitatively, the Administration, the Representative Councils, and the missions paid less attention to standards of quality. As a result, by 1953, educational growth was thought to have become disorderly. This led to the Administration's drive to "normalize" the school situation in A.E.F.

TABLE 6

EVOLUTION OF MISSION EDUCATION IN A.E.F.[a]
1939-1952

	1938-39	1945-46	1948-49	1951-52
Catholic Missions				
Number of Schools	110	85	135	-
Enrollment	8,909	11,210	19,581	-
Protestant Missions				
Number of Schools	41	47	57	-
Enrollment	2,771	4,232	5,722	-
Total				
Number of Schools	151	132	192	453[b]
Enrollment	11,680	15,442	25,584	50,380

a. All levels and types of education.

b. Primary school level only; more than half were located in the Congo.

Source: Annuaire Statistique de l'Afrique Equatorial Francaise. For 1938-1949 period: Vol. I, op. cit., p. 71; for 1951-52 period, Vol. II, op. cit., Table IVa-b.

"Normalization of Education": 1953. In 1953, a most important document appeared in the form of a letter[110] sent to the Chiefs of Territories by the Governor General of A.E.F. Not only did it outline plans for the future development of education in A.E.F., but it also restated some of the principles of policy which guided French educative action. Indirectly, it also allows the observer to see beyond the school statistics reported in the preceding section.

---

[110] This typewritten letter, No. 117/IGE, dated February 11, 1953, is found in the Archives of the Ministry of Education, Brazzaville.

The letter first considers the primary school enrollment figures for the school year 1951-52: 108,144 pupils in 863 schools comprising 2,164 classes in A.E.F.'s public and private primary schools, that is, a fourfold increase over a six-year period. A closer look at the distribution of pupils among the six primary grades revealed a situation characterized as "abnormal" by the Governor General:

Preparatory classes I and II: 76,275 pupils (73%)
Elementary classes I and II: 20,497 pupils (19%)
Middle classes I and II: 9,148 pupils (8%)

Although the opening of beginners' classes allowing the greatest possible number of pupils to be affected by schooling remained a goal to be pursued, a structural distribution such as appeared in these statistics was said to depart too greatly from commonly accepted norms, and therefore reforms were necessary on the following grounds:

1) The school must have a lasting influence on the pupils, and through them, on the community. To attain this objective, primary education is designed to communicate a certain body of knowledge, over a period of five or six years, with methods appropriate for children of a certain age level. The length of the course and the choice of material to be taught are determined not only by the sum of knowledge to be transmitted, but also by the developmental stage of the child and by his emotional and social needs. Therefore, a school system which deprives the majority of the pupils of a complete cycle of studies is inadequate, even dangerous.

2) A child leaving school at eight or nine years of age has not firmly acquired the basic literacy skills; he is only prepared to start learning them. More important, the new modes of behavior which his pliable personality has begun to learn are bound to be lost as soon as the child returns to his previous environment. The idea that such a child can change his social environment or influence its evolution is preposterous. The village school, especially a truncated one, has a very limited influence on the adult community. This function is better performed by "basic education" programs and methods.

4) Middle level classes must be multiplied and strengthened if they are to allow a good selection, in terms of quantity and quality, of secondary school pupils destined to become the economic and social cadres of Africa without which no rapid evolution is possible.

5) Three-grade village schools must soon develop into full six-grade primary schools in order to avoid the large-scale "uprooting" of children caused by the need to send many of them to urban or regional primary boarding schools. The present system of primary school scholarships, in fact, turns these young uprooted children into functionaries. It must come to an end.

The letter proposed an eight-year program designed to correct the situation. In the circumstances, the following structural distribution was thought to constitute a minimum goal:

Preparatory classes I and II: 70,000 pupils
Elementary classes I and II: 48,000 pupils
Middle classes I and II: 46,000 pupils

This new distribution represented a total increase of 58,000 pupils, or more than half the 1951-52 enrollment, to be effected over a period of eight years. It meant the opening of 1,185 new classes (assuming a maximum enrollment of 60 pupils per classroom in the elementary grades and 50 pupils in the middle grades), and, above all, the training of as many qualified teachers as the number of new classes. The majority of primary school teachers, public as well as private, were "moniteurs" holding a primary school certificate only. These were thought "wrongly" to be fit to teach in the preparatory grades; they were totally inadequate at a higher level. On the other hand, recruiting most of the primary school teachers in France was out of the question. The cost was prohibitive, and besides, there were not many French teachers willing to come to A.E.F.[111] Training, on the spot, teachers capable of handling any primary level class was the only alternative.

Under the circumstances, it was believed that teacher preparation in A.E.F. could not yet be done at a level adopted in France only a decade earlier, that is, the "baccalauréat" plus one year of professional training leading to the "Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelles a l'Enseignement" (C.A.P.E.), which allowed its holder to bear the title of "instituteur." Instead, the "Brevet Elémentaire" (B.E.) or the "Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle" (B.E.P.C.) level was considered as sufficient, although, with added professional training, its holder could only become an "instituteur-adjoint."[112] Of the two "brevets," the former was to be preferred. Although it required the same length of studies (four years beyond primary), it differed from the B.E.P.C. in two important respects: 1) its curriculum contained more mathematics, geography, and history; 2) it did not call for the study of modern languages, and thus excluded the possibility of its holder trying to pursue his studies toward the "baccalauréat." In other words, its program was more suitable for future primary school teachers, and since it was definitely terminal in character, it improved the chances of retaining teachers in the profession. The scheme called for one year of professional training beyond the B.E., but in view of the teacher shortage, the candidates who had just failed the B.E. examination could be accepted in the fifth year and granted the title of "moniteurs supérieurs."

---

[111] Thompson and Adloff, op. cit., p. 287. The authors claim that of the 72 posts for French teachers envisioned under the 1946 Ten-Year Plan, only 22 had been filled by 1949. Three Inspectors General in succession went to France on recruiting missions. They themselves failed to return.

[112] This is the type of teachers the Mouyoundzi Normal School was training. Creation of this school had been applauded by the Africans who thought it would lead to the C.A.P.E. It was loudly criticized by them when it turned out only "instituteurs-adjoints."

In accordance with these plans, the creation of a number of "Normal Courses" was envisaged. The establishments would offer all five years of the course, not only the fifth, professional, year. This organization was thought to be necessary since teachers needed to be "formed" over a long period in a suitable atmosphere.

"Normalization" of education, then, meant a reorientation of the educational effort emphasizing vertical instead of horizontal development, the adoption of new criteria for the purpose of allocating financial resources already strained to the breaking point. The scheme, as proposed to the territorial governors, was based on the assumption that the horizontal extension of educational opportunities could, and should, be curbed and the enrollment in beginners' classes kept at 70,000 for the following eight years. In fact, only five years later (1956-57), this figure had increased by more than 55%, and the distribution by courses appeared thus:

Preparatory classes:	108,913 (64%)
Elementary classes:	41,036 (25%)
Middle classes:	18,891 (11%)

With the Congo school system being the most advanced and its structural distribution being slightly closer to "normal," the task of making it conform to the new standards should have been easier than in the other three territories. The Congo Governor's reaction to the Governor General's proposal clearly showed how unrealistic the scheme was. His reply[113] will now be summarized.

The principles on which the "normalization" plan was based were all valid, in Governor Rouys' opinion, but its implementation would affect the Congo most since half the A.E.F. school population was Congolese. With school expenditures already absorbing 25 per cent of the local budget (including subsidies to private education), any additional burden would endanger the precarious budget balance. The Governor agreed that while the plan was being implemented, no new schools

---

113. Letter No. 1351/SE of July 24, 1953, signed by Governor Rouys. Typewritten document kept in the Archives of the Ministry of Education, Brazzaville.

could be opened. This would also limit the development of girls' education. Hence the period over which the "normalization" could be effected would have to be extended over much more than eight years. Any prediction was risky, tied as it was to the increase in the financial resources of the territory; therefore the plan could do no more than establish an order of priority.

The supply of qualified teachers was a determining factor in the rate of vertical development of the Congo school system. Now the current production of the Federal Normal School of Mouyoundzi was approximately ten "instituteurs-adjoints" and 55 "moniteurs supérieurs." Until the proposed "normal courses" could increase the supply (in 1958), the number of additional elementary and middle classes which could be opened each year was limited to 15. This number could be doubled from 1959 on, provided the proposed "normal courses" opened in October, 1954. But the plan called for the opening of over 400 classes! On the basis of teacher supplies alone, the implementation period would have to be extended to 16 years.

Governor Rouys' calculations also assumed that very few beginners' classes would be opened in the next few years. On the other hand, he did not consider the possibility that the missions might contribute to the training of qualified teachers. Neither did he foresee how difficult it would be to stop the school pyramid from growing at the base. In fact, the Administration soon realized that it had cast itself in the role of the "Sorcerer's Apprentice."

State versus Missions. On the eve of World War II, the Catholic missions of the Pointe-Noire Vicariate alone had some 530 "écoles de catéchistas," or "Bible schools," in which some 10,000 boys and girls of school age were receiving religious instruction in native languages.[114] These "schools" were not recognized by the Administration, and bringing them up to official standards was beyond the financial means of the missions. After the war, however, when subsidies to private education were substantially increased,[115] the missions could afford to divert a larger share of their own revenues to the "upgrading" of these "schools." This movement coincided with the Administration's renewed effort to spread public education and it launched an all-out competition between the two major missionary groups (Catholic and Protestant) on the one hand, and the Administration on the other hand. The key to the groups' strategy lay in Article 5 of the January 2, 1937, decree which stated that:[116]

---

114. "Documentation Scolaire" (Bishop Fauret), op. cit.

115. Territorial governments supported primary level schools; the Federal Government, the secondary; and FIDES, school construction.

116. Nos Ecoles, op. cit., p. 5.

> It [the village school] may only be established, by decision of the Governor General, in villages which can, in a radius of four to five kilometers around the school, supply at least 60 pupils of school age.

In a sparsely populated country like the Congo, hundreds of small villages did not contain many more than 60 children of school age. Therefore, the first group, Catholic, Protestant, or "public," who succeeded in setting up a recognized school in a village could automatically prevent any other group from coming in. Thus, each group was irresistibly tempted to spread its resources thin and wide, relying on future resources to consolidate early gains. In this "race" the missions had a significant advantage over the Administration because of already firm contacts in hundreds of villages too small to justify the establishment of an administrative post. This advantage was compounded by the inevitable laxity of official school inspection left to overworked directors of "secteurs scolaires."

Now the Governor General's "normalization" initiative with its emphasis on vertical development and on improvement of standards takes on full significance. There was a strong suspicion among administrative officials that the mission schools' phenomenal growth was not quite "right." In July, 1953, the Congo Administration ordered a special inspection of ". . . all the public and the private schools of the Territory."[117] An Administrator-in-Chief of Overseas France and a Primary School Inspector were designated to carry out the assignment. In addition, the inspection team was expected to:

> . . . propose any appropriate measures regarding matters of coordination and normalization as well as determination of public education budget and subsidies to private education.

The inspection mission soon aroused the Catholic missionaries' suspicions. First, it was carried out in the months of July, August, and September, that is, during the 'long vacations'. Second, the School Inspector on the team had served two years in Ubanghi-Shari where he had earned an anti-missions reputation. The report of the inspection findings confirmed the missionaries' suspicions: it barely mentioned the public schools and turned out to be a long indictment of the mission schools.

In its introduction, the report clearly states the problem as the inspectors saw it:

---

[117] "Coordination de l'Enseignement du premier degré au Moyen-Congo--Aperçu des conclusions de la mission d'inspection." Typewritten document dated 4/11/53, RB/DW. Copy of document obtained through the courtesy of Bishop Fauret, Pointe-Noire.

The irregularities reported here concerning the nonobservance of general and educational regulations, and the unexpected development of private schools during these last years--a development which has its repercussions on public finances--call for reappraisals. This question must be asked: "Does the Middle Congo, where school attendance is relatively advanced, obtain from primary education qualitative results commensurate with its efforts?"

Throughout the report it clearly appears that a single criterion was used to answer this question: to what extent are the official regulations applied? The answer was well known in advance: to a very limited extent. The inspectors, then, went out to find factual evidence to support their conclusions. They found plenty.

In the area of establishment of schools, some schools, authorized since 1949, had been found which were closed temporarily or permanently for lack of the minimum number of 60 pupils. The decision to close them had not been reported to the Administration. Many "annexes" under the responsibility of substitute "moniteurs" had been added to regular schools and operated as separate units without official authorization. In certain areas where a single school would have satisfied the need, private schools competing for influence against one another or against the public school were found--in spite of precise directives designed to avoid such occurrences. The development of education did not seem to be the principal aim of such a competition which was made possible by the privilege the mission had to open "catechism schools." The December 23rd, 1939, decree allowed ". . . coranic and catechism schools to give rudimentary instruction in the French language in communities without a public school." In fact, such schools run by catechists of a very low educational level operated as full-fledged primary schools--in violation of the January 31st, 1938, decree forbidding the establishment of a private primary school without Administration authorization. When, on the one hand, religious instruction was known to be given in African dialect in authorized schools up to the 5th and 6th grade level, it was intriguing to find, on the other hand, such thorough French language instruction in catechism schools.

In the matter of pupil recruitment, pupils were not always recruited in the immediate vicinity of the school but often had to travel far in order to avoid attending a public school or a school of a different faith. Too often pupils were recruited who had long since passed the school age limit. Eighteen year old boys were found in beginners' classes. They were useful for maintenance and construction work, but their scholastic value was doubtful. In general, the age limits were not respected. In a fourth grade class of 32 pupils supposedly below 13 years of age, only 11 were found to be of that age or below, one girl was more than 15, and some boys were 18 to 20 years old. In some preparatory classes, girls of 15 and 16 years of age were found. These girls were there at the request of their fiancés, minor civil servants, who wanted them to learn the French language before their marriage. Such schools could hardly be classified as primary schools. Too, new pupils were admitted in the beginners' classes at any time during the year. If this procedure affected school statistics, it also affected the number of class repeaters. This practice was in direct violation of Article 6 of the January 2nd, 1937, decree which forbade admission after the first fifteen days of the school year.

Private education trained its teachers in five centers with 302 pupils distributed in three classes. Although these centers were described as "normal schools," they did not belong to that category. How could they when candidates for admission were not even required to hold the primary school certificate and when graduates had approximately reached that certificate's level? Public school teachers were trained either at Mouyoundzi (37 students from the Congo, in three classes) or at Boko (54 students from the Congo, in two classes). There was no reason why private education could not closely follow this model. In addition to these 302 teacher-training students, private education had, during the previous year, 147 "moniteurs-in-training" in full charge of classes. Their use had been authorized by Circular No. 6 of Governor General Eboué as a temporary wartime measure. Authorization was granted under strict conditions and was valid for only one year at a time. In no case was the number of authorizations to exceed 1/10th of the number of regular personnel. At the time of inspection, "moniteurs-in-training" made up nearly 30 per cent of the total teaching staff of the private schools. In some village schools, they constituted the entire staff and thus taught without proper supervision. Finally, no authorizations had been requested nor issued during this last school year, but the "moniteurs" were still in service.

Too many schools still kept no records, and those which existed were improperly kept--often in improvised record books. Beginning and end-of-year reports often contained simply total enrollment figures; when age and class distributions were given, they did not correspond to daily records. Inspection reports too often showed only the inspector's signature and a date--no evaluation, no advice on the proper management of the class. Teachers, European and African, were transferred without the Administration being notified--in violation of decree No. 787 of March 6, 1938. School attendance certificates were not always given when pupils left; some pupils had been admitted to a school although their previous attendance certificates indicated that they had reached the school age limit. The textbooks used in public schools were also those used in private schools, but their complete list was not always kept in the archives. Some schools, however, used textbooks not authorized by the Government General--in violation of Article 17 of decree No. 787.

The official programs were not always posted in the classrooms. When they were, simple reference to a book page was often made. In most programs moral education was replaced by religious instruction given in African dialect--in violation of Article 3 of the January 31, 1938, decree.

The official timetable for classes was rarely followed. The regular 30 hours of weekly classroom instruction became 52 hours and 15 minutes in a certain sixth grade: French, 14 hours instead of seven; 14½ hours of arithmetic instead of 3½ hours; 3 3/4 hours of history and geography instead of 1½; no moral instruction; no music; no manual work; and 4¼ hours of religious instruction. Scores of similar examples could have been quoted.

In the example just cited, ten pupils obtained their primary school certificate (C.E.P.) out of an enrollment of 32. A rapid survey of other schools showed an average rate of repeaters of 43.5 per cent, with a rate of 53.5 per cent for the beginners' class. To this "dropout" rate had to be added the losses occurring during the school year. These losses were estimated to be about 14 per cent, in spite of year-round recruiting. One cause of such a high rate of attrition was said to be the great distance the children had to walk in order to reach their school.

In conclusion, the inspectors stated:

> We express the hope that primary education will soon reach a degree of effectiveness proportionate to its cost; this effectiveness can probably be obtained if the Administration, as representative of the Government and manager of public funds, knows how to exercise the financial and pedagogical control for which it is unquestionably responsible.

In the eyes of the inspectors, then, the problem was rather simple: the "unexpected" growth of private education was made possible through numerous breaches of the official regulations. These regulations were still in force, and they carried sanctions. Therefore, apply the sanctions and solve the problem.

This inspectors' report was read to the members of the Territorial immediate reaction on the part of private education spokesmen, particularly from the vice-president of the Catholic Parents Association and from Bishop Fauret, who was especially responsible for Catholic mission education in the Congo. In a letter to the Governor General,[118] Bishop Fauret protested the manner in which the inspection was made and challenged the validity of most of its conclusions. He made no claim that private schools were strictly abiding by all official regulations, but suggested that many of these were outdated and unsuitable. Besides, the public schools, largely overlooked by the inspectors, were probably

---

118. Copy of letter dated January 22, 1954, and kept in the Archives of the Apostolic Vicariate of Pointe-Noire. Obtained by courtesy of Bishop Fauret.

just as guilty. But this argument was not likely to carry much weight. Indeed, by local administration logic, if the public schools were not quite up to standards, they required more funds in order to improve, but if the private schools were found lacking, government subsidies had to be withdrawn until these schools could measure up.

The report's repeated mention of the "unexpected" development of private education attracted the particular attention of Bishop Fauret. The Catholic missions were obviously proud of their achievements. Their case was presented like this in the March 28, 1953, issue of "La Semaine de l'A.E.F.," a publication of the Catholic Church.

A comparison of enrollments and budget allocations for public and private Congo schools showed the following figures:

TABLE 7

COMPARATIVE ENROLLMENTS AND BUDGETS FOR CONGO SCHOOLS
1950-53

	Enrollment (1000's)	Public cost (in millions of CFA francs)	Year
Public	17.7	58.3	1950-51
Private	23.6	45.3	1950-51
Public	22.2	87.9	1951-52
Private	28.0	62.3	1951-52
Public	24.0	128.0	1952-53
Private	32.3	70.0	1952-53

Thus, between 1950 and 1953, public school enrollment increased by 35.4 per cent and private school enrollment, by 36.8 per cent--a very comparable development. But while private education was intensifying its efforts, government subsidies were proportionately reduced. Including 1953 budget figures (public schools: 187,714,000 CFA francs; private education: 68,000,000 CFA francs), public education expenditures increased by 225 per cent from 1950 to 1953; private education subsidies increased by 26.7 per cent.

It seems that this is precisely what public education supporters found unacceptable, namely, that private education should retain a leading position in spite of financial handicaps. It is probable that few French civil servants, if any, would have objected to the existence of mission schools in the Congo if these had remained unimportant in comparison to public schools.

In this controversy, the Congolese élite, as shall be seen later, did not play an active part, tending to consider it an "imported quarrel" to be fought among Europeans. As far as the Governor General was concerned, there is evidence to show that he was anxious to avoid serious clashes. To that effect, he issued a letter to the territorial governors warning them against a too rigid implementation of the new regulations contained in the decree No. 3.477/IGE of October 30, 1953, and the Circular of November 23, 1953. The governors were reminded that the essential aim of the regulations was to ensure precise control of the quality of private education and its close cooperation with public education.

The atmosphere generated by this controversy was hardly conducive to closer cooperation. At least, the events of 1953 led to another reorganization of education in A.E.F. This was done by the decree No. 4153/IGE of December 30, 1953.[119] This decree concerned: the "normalization" of primary education; the professional education of teachers of the "brevet élémentaire" level; the organization of secondary education copied on metropolitan secondary education, with necessary adaptations to local conditions; and the reorganization of technical education oriented toward the needs of the territories. Finally, the scheme dividing the territories into "secteurs scolaires" was improved by the creation of primary school inspection districts, each under the responsibility of a professional primary school inspector.

The discussion of a subsequent report will give an idea of the effectiveness of this reorganization.

Toward Completion of Institutional Transfer: 1954-1957. The Administration's determination to coordinate all efforts in order to "normalize" the Congolese school system was made evident in the preceding section. Its plan to curb horizontal educational development in favor of vertical development was obviously unrealistic, but it showed in a striking way the effects of uncontrolled growth and tended to channel efforts in new directions. The missions, after protesting against criticism, found themselves in basic agreement with the official point of view or felt compelled to accept it rather than renounce the support of public funds. Those connected with public schools also saw the advantages in harmonious coexistence. It can be gathered from the 1957 annual report of the Director of Education[120] that the parallel development of public and private schools was pursued effectively during these last years of French colonial rule. Before discussing educational policy, school statistics[121] summarizing the development of Congolese schools from 1953-54 to 1956-57 will be presented.

---

[119] Annuaire Statistique de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise (1951-55), op. cit., p. BV-3. (The decree itself cannot be found in the Congo Archives.)

TABLE 8

MIDDLE CONGO PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
1953-1957

	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57	A.E.F. 1956-57
Public	25,244	24,345	25,770	29,789	90,702
Private	31,439	32,785	33,774	37,821	78,138
Total	56,683	57,130	59,544	67,610	168,840

TABLE 9

MIDDLE CONGO PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY COURSES
1953-1957

Courses	Schools	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57
Preparatory I & II	Public	16,106	15,433	15,739	18,072
	Private	20,780	21,738	21,841	23,382
Elementary I & II	Public	6,472	6,183	6,853	7,789
	Private	7,850	8,049	8,576	10,346
Middle I & II	Public	2,666	2,729	3,178	3,928
	Private	2,809	2,998	3,357	4,093

---

[120] Inspection Académique de Moyen-Congo, "Rapport sur la situation de l'Enseignement au Moyen-Congo au 1er Janvier 1957 et son

TABLE 10

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PUPILS PER CLASSROOM IN MIDDLE CONGO PRIMARY SCHOOLS 1951-1957

Schools	1951-52	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57
Public	62	60	56.3	53.2	53.3	59.2
Private	38.5	40	47.8	48.9	49.0	54.3
Average	46.0	50	52.0	50.6	50.8	56.3

These statistics provide ample evidence that private education did harmonize its educational development effort with that of public education. Table 8, for instance, shows that private school enrollment for 1954-55, the first year following the "normalization" decree, is slightly greater than the previous year's. Table 9 indicates that much of this increase occurred at the elementary and the middle course levels. In fact, total enrollment in both private and public schools was held down rather successfully during the first three years following the "normalization" decree. Figures for 1956-57 showed a marked increase over the previous year, suggesting that the adjustment period was over and that rapid development of Congolese education was resumed. Table 10 shows another example of how private education followed public education's lead: much of its increased enrollment was managed through steady increases in the number of pupils per classroom. Indeed, the number of private schools actually dropped from 268 to 254 during the 1953-54 school year. This reorganization effort, fully supported by the Administration, also involved closing down some schools while opening others in more appropriate places. This system of compensation was still applied at the beginning of the 1956-57 school year: private education closed down eight preparatory, five elementary, and three middle classes but obtained authorization to open nine preparatory classes, 17 elementary, and ten middle, for a net gain of 20 classes, or precisely the number of new public school classes opened during that year.[122]

évolution au cours de l'année 1956," RB/BR/13/2/57. (Only a carbon copy of this typewritten document was made available to the writer.)

121. Statistics found in annexes to the above report.

122. Ibid.

Finally, another measure contributed to the improvement of the situation in the preparatory classes. Circular No. 395 of April 26, 1956, forbade repetition of the beginners' class. For the pupils who could not move up to the second grade at the end of one year, some special "catching up" classes were organized whenever possible. The program of the beginners' class was reviewed during the first three months, and the repeaters moved directly up to the elementary course at the end of the year.

Thus, many of the areas of friction between public and private education were eliminated. One major question still remained: government subsidies had increased regularly but were still considered insufficient by the mission authorities. This matter was not settled until the Congo became independent, that is, when the Congolese Government took over responsibility for most of the cost of private education.

Training and upgrading of in-service teachers was pursued as an essential condition for the qualitative improvement of primary education. The Congo now had its own teacher-training institution, the Collège Normal Raymond-Paillet, at Dolisie, which had already graduated two successive groups of "instituteurs-adjoints" and one group of "moniteurs supérieurs." To these were added the graduates of the Federal Normal School of Mouyoundzi assigned to the Congo. The "moniteurs" (approximate level of general education: 6th grade) were used only in the beginners' classes, but efforts were made to improve their level of general education and their professional skill. In the long vacation of 1956, for instance, 224 "moniteurs" attended special courses organized in three centers (Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Fort Rousset). In addition, these "moniteurs" were encouraged to take correspondence courses, such as those offered by the "Centre National d'Enseignement par Correspondance" (Paris), in preparation for the B.E.P.C. or even the baccalaureate examinations.

One of the main justifications for the emphasis on the vertical development of primary education was that this should provide better selection of secondary school candidates. In October 1956, 302 pupils were admitted in "sixième" (the lowest secondary school class) out of 890 who took the examination. Such a high proportion of failures, however, left much room for improvement. A temporary solution was found in the creation of "7th grade" classes as a sort of preparatory class for admission into the secondary.[123] In 1955-56, three such classes were in operation, one each in Pointe-Noire, Brazzaville, and Fort-Rousset, and almost all their pupils were admitted in secondary in October, 1956. Similar classes were opened at Dolisie and Djambala. In all cases, European teachers were placed in charge.

---

[123] In France, pupils are generally admitted in the secondary after five years in the primary; French African pupils were regularly given six years of primary education.

The large post-war increase in European population in the Congo--connected with the implementation of the Plan--had caused the development of primary schools following metropolitan programs of studies in the three main urban centers of the Congo, that is, in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, and Dolisie. Among the special features of these schools, three attracted Congolese criticism: 1) the existence of kindergarten classes; 2) the maintenance of a lower number of pupils per classroom; and 3) the provision of a school bus service. The Administration responded by abolishing the kindergarten classes and encouraging the local Red Cross to operate a nursery school, by increasing enrollment per classroom, and by letting private enterprise handle transportation.

The problem of placement of Congolese educated youths continued to preoccupy responsible French educators. Following passage of the "Loi-Cadre," placement of primary certificate holders still presented few problems. Since a relatively small proportion of pupils passed the certificate examinations and a still smaller proportion was admitted into secondary, the swelling enrollment in the middle courses promised to multiply these problems. Already the 1953 economic recession had caused high unemployment at a time when the school "normalization" reforms were forcing many youths out of school before they could obtain their primary school certificates. Thus, educators realized that ". . . within the framework of formal education, all efforts must be made to stop the youths' exodus toward the cities and to prepare them for manual work."

In urban centers, the Apprenticeship Sections were thought to be adequate to their task. They admitted only primary certificate holders, gave them one year of general education for orientation purposes, then a second year of strictly specialized training in trades currently in demand--using methods developed in France for the "Formation Professionnelle Accélérée" (F.P.A.). The Sections' Heads were also responsible for the placement of apprentices. In 1956, they had been fully successful in Pointe-Noire and in Dolisie. But in Boko, a similar section was closed down when it turned out that it did not correspond to local needs.

In rural areas, "Manual Sections" offered two years of vocational training in a broader range of skills. They were aimed at producing "polyvalent" tradesmen adapted to a variety of lower technical tasks required at village level. However, the main responsibility of rural schools was not to train craftsmen, but farmers. The Director of Education remarked that little had been done so far in this area and that most attempts had failed. Beginning in October, 1957, new Agricultural Sections were to be set up with the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture. The sections were to admit middle course pupils, with or without the primary school certificate, and to provide training in agricultural techniques adapted to local conditions. The first sections were to be set up in the vicinity of agricultural stations and in areas where the "paysannats" (modern agricultural settlements) were being developed.

The industrial development prospects of the Pointe-Noire area, tied to the building of the Kouilou Dam, were also given consideration by the education officials. It was thought that the existing vocational schools of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire could be expanded and supplemented by "F.P.A." centers in order to face the increased demand for specialists and technicians. But no hasty transformation was to take place until industrial development was assured: "Nothing would be more dangerous than giving at this time too great an expansion to technical education in the absence of employment opportunities."

Only secondary education in a narrow sense was discussed by the Director of Education in his 1957 report. In this respect, the Congo was more advanced than any of the other A.E.F. territories in that it had a Federal "lycée" (Savorgnan de Brazza, in Brazzaville) and a territorial "Collège Classique et Moderne" (Victor Augagneur, in Pointe-Noire). In October, 1957, the latter was to have eight classes distributed over six grades--one grade short of the complete "long" secondary cycle.

Reference was also made to the few Congolese students currently in France. Those who were in French institutions of higher learning were placed under the responsibility of the Federal authorities. But this left some thirty scholarship holders pursuing secondary or technical studies in France. Their situation was described as very unsatisfactory, since few students ever obtained their baccalaureate in France. Some had been repatriated and admitted in newly established Congolese secondary schools in order to improve their chances of completing their secondary education. The rapid development of local secondary schools was seen as the best solution to the problems created by immature African students who had reached France with or without the authorization and support of local governments.

Finally, full credit was given to the contribution of FIDES to the construction and equipment of school facilities. In addition to the construction of the "Collège" at Pointe-Noire, the improvement of the Normal Schools at Dolisie and Mouyoundzi, and the equipment of the Vocational School at Brazzaville, a total of 178 public primary classes were built or repaired from 1953 to 1957 at a cost of 67 million CFA francs. This figure did not include the building improvements accomplished with local funds, nor the FIDES funds allocated at federal level to private schools (a total of 128 million CFA francs for A.E.F. private primary schools from 1953 to 1957). For the immediate future, various new constructions and improvements were planned, particularly for girls' classes, for the repair of 100 primary classrooms, and for the addition of 150 new classes.

The implementation of such a "realistic" program was expected to produce, by the end of the year 1961, the following results:

Public secondary education: 1700 students (including Federal "lycee" and Normal School enrollments).

Technical education (various levels): 500 to 600 students.

Manual and Agricultural Sections: about 1500 pupils.

Public primary education: about 45,000 pupils, for a total of about 80,000 pupils including private primary school pupils.

These figures were thought to lie close to the ". . . optimal schooling of the Congo in the present state of the demography and means of penetration."

Following this discussion of the educational situation and policy during the school year 1956-57, the examination results of the July, 1957, session will give an indication of the qualitative "output" of the Congolese school system:

TABLE 11

MIDDLE CONGO EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS
LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (C.E.P.)
JULY 1957

	No. of Candidates			Passed			Percentage of Candidates over 6th Grade Enrollment	Percentage Passed over Candidates
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total		
Public	877	90	967	384	35	419	42	43
Private	953	122	1,075	348	41	389	62	36
Others	563	52	615	133	14	147	-	24
Total	2,397	264	2,657	865	90	955	-	36

Source: Ministry of Education, Brazzaville, "School Statistics on January 1st, 1958," p. 56. (Mimeographed.)

In addition, private education presented 102 boys and 18 girls to the "moniteurs" examination. Forty-four boys and five girls were admitted. Public education no longer trained "moniteurs."

At the secondary level, no Congolese had yet reached the baccalaureate level in local institutions, but examinations were held in three centers (Pointe-Noire, Dolisie, and Brazzaville) for the "Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle" (B.E.P.C.) and for the "Brevet Elémentaire" (B.E.).

TABLE 12

CONGO EXAMINATION RESULTS FIRST SECONDARY CYCLE (B.E.P.C.)
(PUBLIC AND PRIVATE)
JULY 1957

	Europeans		Africans		Total	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	Number of Candidates					
Pointe-Noire	11	6	68	3	79	9
Dolisie	0	0	25	0	25	0
Brazzaville	29	30	176	2	205	32
Total	40	36	269	5	309	41
	Number of Passes					
Pointe-Noire	7	7	19	0	26	7
Dolisie	0	0	3	0	3	0
Brazzaville	8	9	40	0	48	9
Total	15	16	62	0	77	16

Source: Ministry of Education, Brazzaville, "School Statistics on January 1st, 1958," p. 62. In addition, 19 Africans obtained the B.E. out of 75 candidates.

Transfer of Control: 1958. When, on September 28, 1958, the Congo, in response to General de Gaulle's referendum, chose autonomy within the French Community, a most decisive step was taken in the political evolution of the Congo. Except in matters of foreign affairs and defense, full executive power fell in the hands of democratically elected Congolese. But this was by no means the first time Congolese leaders were in a position to influence domestic policy. Within the framework of the French Union of 1946 some Congolese representatives had held positions in "deliberative bodies" at the Territorial, Federal, French National, and French Union levels. It is at the two lower levels (Territorial and Federal) that Congolese representatives had their best opportunity to influence policy. The powers of the Territorial Assemblies and of the Grand Council of French Equatorial Africa were at first strictly deliberative, execution being the exclusive domain of appointed French officials. Assemblymen and Councillors, for instance, could not propose programs of action, but had considerable influence in the shaping and orientation of such programs through their financial control. Until 1956, African and European representatives were elected by separate colleges, giving the European minority a relatively large representation. Criticized on these grounds, the double college, however, had at least two great advantages. First, the presence of influential Europeans in Assemblies undoubtedly helped the appointed executive adjust its attitudes to the new conditions. Second, within the representative bodies, conflicting European and African interests could have led to deep divisions and to greatly reduced effectiveness. Thanks largely to the European members' assumption of the role of mentors of their African colleagues, moderation and wisdom prevailed while the latter members served their apprenticeship in parliamentary behavior and technique.

In educational matters, French post-war policy met with the general approval of the African élite. Apart from the declared goal of universal education, promised access to secondary and higher education was enthusiastically received. But if basic agreement existed at the general policy level, divergences soon developed in two important areas: 1) the speed of educational development and 2) its orientation in the direction of ever greater conformity with the metropolitan school system. The African representatives consistently pressed at Territorial and Federal levels for speed and uniformity. This position was clearly illustrated in parliamentary debates when educational matters came under discussion. Two examples will be given here.

In 1947, responsibility for primary education had been turned over to the territories, and its administration and budget submitted to the scrutiny of the Territorial Assemblies. Secondary education and scholarships in France remained the responsibility of the Government General, and submitted to the control of the Grand Council of the French Equatorial Africa. Thus, at the May 13, 1950, meeting of the Grand Council, the councillors were invited to approve minor modifications to a proposed decree regarding the granting of scholarships. The modifications under discussion were concerned with the composition of the Territorial and Federal commissions responsible for these matters. But it gave the councillors an opportunity to express their views, not only on the question of scholarships, but on the whole operation of the secondary school system.[124] Indeed, the councillors were not inclined to discuss the matter of scholarship commissions, since, in their opinion, the existing secondary school programs did not adequately prepare African students to pursue their studies in France. The argument went somewhat like this: one of the most serious problems in A.E.F. is education. In order to solve this problem, the largest possible number of students must be sent to France and returned to train the school cadres. But this will only be possible "when educational programs in A.E.F. and the Metropole are "unified." Monsieur Evouna, a Grand Councillor from Gabon, quoted a formal wish expressed by the Grand Council Commission formed to study this proposed decree:

> That a cricular be sent to territorial governors, requesting them not to block systematically the sending of scholarship students to the Metropole.
>
> That appropriate measures be taken to ensure that no scholarship student is sent back to A.E.F. except for very good reasons.
>
> Finally, the Commission reiterates the often expressed wish that the school programs in A.E.F. be standardized with those of the Metropole.

The Congolese representative, Monsieur Tchichelle, who later became Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Congo, would rather have had the Administration concentrate on applying existing decrees and regulations instead of worrying about new texts. The "Ecole de Cadres Supérieurs" came under particular criticism. In spite of the Administration's claim that this school and the secondary courses of Brazzaville and Bangui were bringing their students up to the level of the first part of the French baccalaureate, no metropolitan institution, as of 1950, had yet accepted their graduates at that level. Again, the standardization of programs and diplomas, at all levels, was seen as the only solution to the problem.

In the course of the same session, another matter provided the Grand Councillors with an opportunity to express their views regarding the role of private education, particularly that of the Catholic missions. Father Le Comte, the Catholic missions' spokesman and a Grand Councillor himself, presented a five-year school development plan for which the Church was seeking financial assistance from FIDES. The Administration had just accepted the principle of such an assistance, and the detailed plan was being submitted to the Grand Council prior to the presentation of the fund request to the Administration and to FIDES. For the financial year 1950-51 alone, a sum of 204.5 million CFA francs was considered for A.E.F. Catholic education, of which 131.5 million francs were to be spent in the two Congolese dioceses.

---

[124] Débats du Gran Conseil de l'Afrique Equatoriale Francaise, Session Ordinaire, 24 avril 1950" (Brazzaville: Imprimerie Officielle, 1950), p. 114.

On this question, European and African representatives who took part in the debate were sharply divided. The European Councillor from Chad, while agreeing in principle that public funds might be used to assist the missions in their educational efforts, made two important objections: 1) On the basis of the submitted plan, he estimated that the Catholic missions themselves intended to spend about 100 million CFA francs per year for five years on buildings and equipment (half the FIDES contribution), plus an equal amount for operating costs. He doubted that the missions were able to carry such a burden, and wondered who would be called upon to assume responsibility for part of the added operating costs. 2) He insisted that Territorial Assemblies be consulted first, since the territories would eventually be called upon to pay part of the new schools' operating expenses.

In answer to the first objection, Father Le Comte admitted that the rising cost to the missions for operating the schools was indeed a serious problem. But, he contended, building costs tended to rise more sharply than operating costs. Besides, under existing conditions, the efficiency of available personnel was reduced for lack of adequate physical facilities.

Another European councillor, Monsieur Cazaban-Mazerolles, after stating that he was not surprised at this new mission request for assistance funds, expressed the traditional opinion of the "republican" Frenchman:[125]

> I wonder why, within limited programs such as ours, one can think of granting to an education system which I would call denominational such considerable sums. What we want is a public education which produces free men in the spirit of the Republic.

This introduction of the French State-Church controversy in the discussion brought immediate protests from many of the African councillors, some two-thirds of whom were mission-educated. Their desire to keep this controversy out of Africa was made quite plain, in the words of Councillor Tchichelle:

> You know that the peoples of A.E.F. favor the multiplicity of schools, whether denominational or lay; in their view education

---

[125] Ibid., p. 120.